

Church of God ?

or

The Temples of Satan

R. A. Anderson

The
**CHURCH
OF GOD?**

or

*The Temples
of SATAN?*

**A REFERENCE BOOK OF
SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING &
GNOSIS**

By
R A Anderson



TGS Publishers

The Church of God or the Temples of Satan
Author: R. A. Anderson

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Dedication

My deep and eternal gratitude to the living
Master for revealing the Truth to me is
beyond words.

I would also like to acknowledge the help of
Michael Tsarion, without which, this book
might never have been published.
Thanks Michael.

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About the author:

Robert A. Anderson was born (1945) and educated in the United Kingdom. Soon after graduating from college he moved to South Africa. This was where, after a long and committed search, he eventually (1973) discovered the "meaning and true purpose of life," through meeting a genuine Spiritual Master and being initiated into the "Knowledge" of Truth (Gnosis).

He then entered an ashram (a spiritual shelter / retreat) where he lived for two years, practicing the Master's sacred techniques for Meditation on the Divine.

In 1982, back in the UK, he started researching the necessary materials for writing the present book. He admits that he is not a talented author, but nevertheless felt that it was necessary to make an attempt at explaining his experiences of Truth in clear and simple terms - not the obscure technical jargon of so many mystical books.

This book is based on the author's own personal experiences and study, and does not (knowingly) reflect the views of anyone else.

PREFACE

"Recent investigations have challenged the traditional outlook and the traditional conclusions and the traditional facts. With some today, and with many more tomorrow, the burning question is, or will be – not how did a particularly silly and licentious heresy rise within the church – but how did the church rise out of the great Gnostic movement, and how did the dynamic ideas of the Gnosis become crystallised into dogmas?"

Rev. F. Lamplugh

This study is not based on *belief, intellectual philosophy, or theoretical theology*. It is based on pure and simple fact (Spiritual Reality) – on the author's personal *experience of Truth* – on *revealed (Visionary) Knowledge of God (Gnosis)*. Such experience is identical to that described by many genuine disciples and Prophets of God throughout the ages, and throughout the Scriptures of all renowned religions. Even though many today will reject such a possibility – as they always have – this Sacred/Mystic experience IS available to ALL who truly thirst. YES, it is available TODAY, as it has always been, to ALL who sincerely seek!

From this experience, it is clear that what we call religion is merely a poor and corrupted imitation of Truth. Christianity, for example, does not truly represent what Jesus taught – quite the opposite in fact – it actually represents everything that Jesus condemned. For instead of revealing the personal GNOSIS and EXPERIENCE (VISION) of God right HERE and NOW (as Jesus did – and all genuine *living Masters* do), it (and all religions) can only offer *theories* – futile theological *beliefs*, empty *promises*, and false *hopes* for the *future* – nothing more than blind faith in mere words from a book, as the religion of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Simply lip service, and

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the practise of various exoteric rites and rituals.

The purpose of this study is to explain the Truth – to help others in their quest to discover and **EXPERIENCE** the **REALITY** for themselves. It cannot *reveal* the Truth – no book can do that – not the Bible or any other. However, the author hopes it will make complete sense to the modern mind, and unveil the truth that lies hidden behind all ancient religious scriptures.

A book such as this would have been banned and burned by the church not so very long ago – indeed, so would the author himself, and anyone found reading it! No doubt, even today, many fundamentalists will destroy it in anger and ignorance, and it will probably be condemned by the church as a whole. However, for those who are genuinely seeking for Truth – this is for YOU.

This work is by no means a literary masterpiece or an easy read – the author is not a talented writer or spokesperson, and the subject matter is very difficult to explain adequately in words. It is not actually the subject matter that is difficult (it is the simplest thing imaginable), but the indoctrinated and stubborn minds of humanity that make it difficult to explain (this is why Jesus apparently said: Come to me with the openness and simplicity of a little child). Thus, it is hoped that this will be read with an open heart and an understanding mind for what it is. There is only one qualification for understanding the Truth – and that is a real Spiritual thirst. Just like water in the desert – the Truth is more valuable than gold or jewels.

All Praise to the living Lord of Truth

R. A. Anderson

INTRODUCTION

With the present situation of religious hatred literally exploding across the world, and religious terror organisations emerging on every continent, perhaps now the time has finally arrived for us to examine, expose and eliminate the many false beliefs and erroneous traditions which have accumulated in all the world's religions. Various elements of 'Truth'¹ can still be found amongst the teachings and beliefs of most religions, but sadly, no religion represents or reveals the whole Truth. The 'ultimate' (Spiritual) Truth, by definition, is *singular*. The fact that there are so many religions, each split into numerous 'sects', 'creeds' and 'parties', indicates that very many (all?) sincere and dedicated 'believers' must therefore be somewhat misguided!

In order to discover the truth of any matter one must observe all the available evidence in an unbiased way. However, every human being is indoctrinated and prejudiced since early childhood by various ethnic ideologies and customs, which include various forms and degrees of religious, political and social traditions and dogmas. For instance, those who are raised in a Muslim environment are just as likely to believe in the *uniquely* perfect truth of Islam, as are those brought up under Christian influences likely to claim for Christianity.² It should therefore be clear that no fervent member of any

¹ In this study, words representing a *Mystical* or *Spiritual* entity have been assigned capital letters (e.g. there are 'truths' (worldly / mundane) and 'the Truth' (Ultimate, Spiritual, and Eternal)), and also pronouns referring to God or the Lord.

² This religious phenomenon of dogmatically claiming unique superiority (e.g. the 'chosen' status) is similar to that immature tendency of children who claim that their own father / mother / family is superior to others; or the adult susceptibility to nationalistic pride (i.e. patriotism) and racial prejudice.

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religious group is in a position to make a realistic and unbiased observation of the facts. Only genuine, sincere and open-minded *seekers* will have any chance of discovering the whole Truth.

One example of the dogmatic errors and plain ignorance displayed by so-called *orthodox* religions is the case of Galileo, who was threatened with torture and excommunication by the supposed *Christian* Inquisition unless he "repented" of his "errors and heresies," namely his *theory* that the Earth was not at the centre of the universe. This was not even a theological issue! Today this story seems almost unbelievable – practically prehistoric – but it happened only a few short centuries ago. This is by no means an isolated case; countless thousands have been murdered throughout history at the bloody hands of various self-righteous orthodoxies for similar 'heretical' *crimes*.

Once again, it must be emphasised that it is absolutely essential to have an open mind if one genuinely desires to know the Truth. To stubbornly cling to traditional 'beliefs' and arrogantly ignore all further facts and revelations is exactly what many Jews did at the time of Jesus (e.g. the scribes (= *religious scholars*); the Sadducees (= *aristocratic, authoritarian, materialistic, priestly, literalists*); and the Pharisees (= *popular, self-righteous, conservative theologians / philosophers*) – who are all so much criticised in the pages of the New Testament. The problem with all these types – then, as today – is their stubborn arrogance and pride. It is reported that Jesus said, "*unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.*" (MATT.18:3). In other words, anyone wishing to understand the Truth must first cleanse their mind of all indoctrinated religious beliefs, pride, and prejudice, and be completely open and ready to listen and learn afresh, *like little children*.

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Pride and prejudice have always been major causes of error and hatred. Institutionalised Christianity today is in a similar condition to that of Judaism at the time of Jesus – genuine *Mystic Revelation* has been replaced by a proud and dogmatic intellectualism, blind beliefs,³ and mere exoteric rites and rituals. The *first hand* 'Visionary' experiences of Prophets⁴ have been replaced by the adept words of worldly, materialistic, and self-appointed priests and teachers.⁵ Although all religions *talk* about Spiritual experience and Truth, their actions and achievements demonstrate their ignorance. The fact that religions are always intimately involved with wars and terrorism – priests always promising their own side the

³ Socrates, who lived from 469 to 399 BC, taught that, in matters of Spirituality, it is necessary to seek out genuine Knowledge by exposing false pretensions. Ignorance is the only source of evil, he argued, so it is improper to act out of ignorance or to accept Spiritual instruction from those who have not proven their own Wisdom. Instead of relying blindly on authority, we should unceasingly question our own beliefs and the beliefs of others in order to seek out genuine Wisdom. He also taught that every person has full Knowledge of Ultimate Truth contained within their soul, and needs only to be spurred to conscious reflection to realise Truth.

⁴ The Hebrew words: *hōzeh, rō'eh, & nābî'*, which are usually translated in the Bible as "prophet", actually mean a Spiritual 'Seer' (one who actually sees and communicates with God). A genuine Prophet should not be confused with a soothsayer (fortune-teller), who merely "foresees" future events!

⁵ "*Both prophet (false) and priest are godless; even in My temple I find their wickedness,' declares the Lord. 'Therefore their path will be slippery; they will be banished to darkness and there they will fall'... 'Do not listen to what they are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise Me: 'The Lord says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say: 'No harm will come to you.' But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see Him or to hear His Word?"* (JER.23:11-18). "*These people come near to Me (the Lord) with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men.*" (ISAIAH 29:13).

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blessings of God for killing an 'enemy', even an enemy who might be a dedicated follower of the same religion – is just one sorrowful example of such ignorance! This form of so-called 'religion' – the mere doctrines and concepts of humankind – has been the cause of much hatred and bloodshed since the beginning of history. Today it is manifesting in the escalating incidence of worldwide acts of terrorism and hatred. As it is stated: *By their fruits you can know them!*

One ancient and universal example of the erroneous beliefs of all religions is their unanimous interpretation of the originally *Spiritual Law of 'Sacrifice'*.⁶ The original Law required that **each of us sacrifice** (i.e. make Sacred/Pure/Holy) **our own initial** (i.e. 'first-born') **animalistic** (beastly/carnal/ unspiritual) **nature**, **through the purifying 'flame'** (God's Light⁷) **of Truth**, in order that we might be '**reborn**' (resurrected) **into Spiritual consciousness** (i.e. 'True and Eternal Life') – or, to put it another way, we must each abolish ('kill') our own (initially) 'beastly' (carnal) nature.⁸ This original and *eternal* Law was (and still is) interpreted by various materialistic / literalistic priesthoods to mean that God requires the bloody slaughter of ('first-born' and 'pure') *human* or *animal* victims to absolve the sins of humanity! Orthodox Christianity has interpreted Jesus' crucifixion in the same

⁶ The word 'sacrifice' originally meant, "*to make sacred or holy*". It had nothing to do with *bloodshed* and the *physical* murder of humans or animals as an offering to God! Does not God command: 'Thou shall not kill?'

⁷ The Vision of God (the Divine Light, Heb. Shekhinah) is often described as a 'flame of fire,' 'lightning,' the 'Sun,' etc. "The Angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses) as a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed (i.e. is Eternal)." (EXOD.3:2; cf. EXOD.19:18; 24:17; DEUT.4:24; PSA.18:8-12; EZEK.1:4-5 & 27; DAN.10:6; HEB.12:29). "He (God) makes the breath His messenger, and **flames of fire** his ministers." (PSA.104:4).

⁸ "Present your [own] bodies (i.e. the lower self / carnal ego) as a *living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.*" (ROM.12:1).

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carnal way (i.e. as a 'blood' sacrifice for *our* sins).⁹ Such false interpretations of the true and eternal Law provided the materialistic 'self-appointed' priesthoods with great power over the populace as well as a large source of income and wealth. Such income was derived from their monopolistic control of suitably 'pure' sacrificial victims, and the later resale of their flesh and hides.¹⁰ This unique sacrificial authority of the priesthood, along with all the material benefits which were to revert to them, was eventually written down in the 'name of God', and thus entered various religious scriptures such as the Hebrew Bible (see e.g. the first nine chapters of LEVITICUS – named after the hereditary Jerusalem Temple keepers, the Levites).¹¹ All genuine Prophets, who stated that God had never asked for such carnal rituals, condemned these blood sacrifices.¹² Of course, today the priesthoods rely on other superficial rites and rituals to compliment the drama and maintain their power, such as consuming the

⁹ This idea probably originated with St. Paul (see e.g. 1stCOR.5:7; ROM.3:25; 5:8-9; 9:26-28 & 10:10; & EPH.5:2 & 9:28). Jesus is reported to have said: "*For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the Truth.*" (JOHN 18:37) – not to die as a sacrificial victim (a totally false and unspiritual concept)! For a summary of Paul's false beliefs & teachings, see APPENDIX 7, p.195.

¹⁰ "The sacrifices made to God are re-sold by the priests, who then spend the proceeds on themselves." (BARUCH – 'The Letter of Jeremiah' 6:27-28). See also 1stSAM.2:13-16. The whole of LEVITICUS is concerned with the clergy's power and control over the nation's worship, and the great material and financial benefits they could derive from such. Much like the Catholic Church selling indulgences in the Middle Ages. Such practices are commonly known as simony.

¹¹ "How can you say: 'We are wise: we possess the Law of the Lord?' for the lying pens of the scribes have falsified it!" (JER.8:8). Such lying applies to some of the original writings, as well as to the later copying, editing, and translation processes. "In the process of time ungodly customs strengthen, and are eventually observed as Law!" (WISDOM 14:16).

¹² See e.g. JER.7:22; HOSEA 6:6; ISAIAH 1:11-15 & 66:3; PSA.40:6 & 51:16; MIC.6:6-8; AMOS 5:21-22; & HEB.10:4-6.

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supposed *body* and *blood* of Jesus.¹³ This is just one example of the many errors which materialistic / literalistic priests and scholars of all religions have made (and are still making) in their interpretation of Spiritual Truth. Thus the importance of being receptive and open to new (or rather, original and *true*) perspectives – *Spiritual perspectives* – of the teachings contained in religious scriptures cannot be over-stressed. It will be very difficult for zealous, proud, and dogmatic traditionalists to accept the facts revealed in this investigation, however, for genuine 'seekers' of Truth, the essence of the 'Great Mystery' – "*the secret hidden since the beginning*", "*the cornerstone rejected by the builders*" – will be revealed in no uncertain terms!

In this study, the Judaeo-Christian scriptures have been chosen as a basis for the arguments merely because the majority of English speaking peoples are more familiar with them; although it should be noted that similar (the same) Spiritual teachings are contained in all genuine (i.e. Spiritually Inspired) scriptures of the world's great religions. Although the Hebrew and Christian texts (i.e. the "Old" and the "New" Testaments) do now contain a certain amount of corrupt and materialistic additions¹⁴ and

¹³ The Christian sacraments of the bread and wine ('flesh' and 'blood') are merely symbolic forms and replicas of many ancient pagan rites, and are intended to preserve the monopolistic control of the priesthood.

¹⁴ E.g., Mark's Gospel is found with ***four different endings*** amongst the ancient manuscripts, but only two have any possible (yet flimsy) claim to authenticity: (1) the ending that concludes the gospel at 16:8; and (2) the 'Longer Ending' (16:9-20). However, most scholars, the oldest and best-attested manuscripts and versions, plus principles of textual criticism, **all end Mark at 16:8**. Thus, one question still arises: Did Mark actually intend to end his gospel at 16:8? If so, the following need to be explained: (1) why the early church felt so strongly its lack of completion, witnessed by the insertion of a variety of longer endings; (2) why a book that purports to be the "good news about Jesus Christ" should end with the women being afraid; and (3) why it records no resurrection appearances to Peter and the other disciples (cf. 16:7). The best solution is that Mark did write an ending to his gospel, but that it was somehow lost, or perhaps intentionally destroyed because of some

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interpretations of Truth,¹⁵ as well as copyists errors, evidence of a great deal of editing,¹⁶ and incorrect

undesirable (*to orthodoxy*) revelations! The various longer endings we now possess represent attempts by the church to supply what was obviously lacking, or to amend something that they considered unacceptable! There are many other examples of such variations (additions, omissions, etc.) in the most ancient manuscripts, see e.g. JOHN 7:53 – 8:11 (a later addition); and also in MATT.18:11; LUKE 9:55; 11:2-4; 22:19-20, 43-44; 23:34; 24:6, 12, 40, & 51.

¹⁵ Ptolemaeus, an early (second century) Christian, observed that the 'laws' contained in the Old Testament were not all given by or from God! In his 'Letter to Flora' (preserved by Epiphanius) he states: "*The entire law which is contained in the Pentateuch of Moses was not decreed by one being, I mean, not by God alone, but that there are some commandments in it which were even decreed by men. The words of the Saviour (Jesus) teach us that it is divided into three parts. There is that section which is attributed to God Himself and His legislating activity; the second division is that belonging to Moses – not in the sense that God gives laws through him, but in the sense that Moses, starting from his own ideas, gave some laws; and the third part [is attributable] to the elders of the people, who are responsible for having introduced some commandments of their own. You will now learn how it can be shown from the words of the Saviour that this is in fact the case. Once the Saviour was talking with people who were discussing with him the subject of divorce, where the existing legal prescription permitted divorce. Now the Saviour said to them: "Because of your hard-heartedness Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it was not so."*" (MATT.19:8) "*For God joined together this union, and what the Lord joins together man shall not dissolve.*" (MATT.19:6). Thus he shows that there is a law of God which forbids the wife being divorced from her husband, but there is another law: that of Moses: which permits the dissolving of the union because of hard-heartedness. In fact, Moses lays down legislation contrary to that of God; for joining is contrary to not joining... Thus, we have demonstrated that the law of Moses is different from the Law of God... Isaiah also proclaimed: "*In vain do they worship me (God), whilst they teach as precepts the commandments of men.*" (ISAIAH 29:13; cf. MATT.15:4-9). From this it is obvious that the law in its entirety is divided into three parts: for we find in it the legislation of Moses, of the elders, and of God Himself." See also above, page 13, note 11.

¹⁶ E.g. compare, in detail, the following passages: MATT.27:3-5 with ACTS 1:16-18; & also ACTS 9:7 with ACTS 22:9. Also, by comparing early manuscripts with those of the medieval period, we can tell, to some extent, how the church altered the text according to its theological dictates. For example, a passage such as 1st John 5:7-8, "*For there are*

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translation from the original languages, etc;¹⁷ even so,

three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood," was transformed into a Trinitarian formula: "For there are three that testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one." We cannot, however, know how much the texts have been corrupted since the original autographs – a "dark age" of more than two hundred years!

¹⁷ See, e.g., the preface and introductions to both the Old and New Testaments in the NEW ENGLISH BIBLE, from which the following is quoted (concerning the OLD TESTAMENT): "*There are passages where, in the present state of our knowledge, no one could say with certainty which of two (or even more) possible meanings is intended... There is probably no member of the panel (of translators) who has not found himself obliged to give up, perhaps with lingering regret, a cherished view about the meaning of this or that difficult passage... It is certain that this* (i.e. the 'received' text of the Hebrew Old Testament) **does not always represent what was originally written...** many obscurities still remain in the Hebrew Scriptures. The classical Hebrew vocabulary as known today is small, with the consequence that **the meaning of an unusually large number of words is uncertain or unknown.**" And concerning the NEW TESTAMENT: "*The majority of manuscripts, which, being for the most part of late date, had been exposed not only to accidental corruptions of long-continued copying, but also in part to deliberate correction and improvement(?!)... The problem of restoring a form of text as near as possible to the vanished autographs now appears less simple than it did to our ancestors... The present translators therefore could do no other than consider variant readings on their merits, and, having weighed the evidence for themselves, select for translation in each passage the reading which to the best of their judgement seemed most likely to represent what the author wrote.*" To obtain a true translation of any such profound Spiritual works, much more is needed than just knowledge of ancient languages – Spiritual GNOSIS (i.e. first-hand Knowledge of God) is definitely required! It is because of a lack of such Knowledge that there are so many different versions of the Scriptures – none of which are perfect and reveal the profoundness of the original text! Thus, the translations given in this study have been amended where necessary. It should also be noted that Jesus and his original (mostly uneducated) followers spoke Aramaic, whereas the earliest extant copies of all New Testament writings are in Greek. Thus we are now totally reliant on the translational, literary, and editorial capabilities (not to mention the memories) of various unknown Hellenist Christians in accurately preserving, in Greek, the true words and interpretations of Jesus' teachings and actions. This poses quite a problem when one considers the wide variety of doctrinal opinions and beliefs of even the earliest Christians. It is also highly improbable that any of the New Testament books were written by anyone having first-hand knowledge of the *living* Jesus. See also, John H. Sailhamer, *How*

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there still remains enough original material in these writings for the Truth to be established – but only through a combination of genuine Spiritual 'Knowledge' (i.e. Gnosis) and careful, unbiased study!

Most (all?) theologians and ministers of 'historic' religions depend on, and are biased by, a combination of *indoctrinated* traditional 'beliefs' (which have been accumulated since childhood), blind-faith, and personal ideological preferences when asserting their dogmas. "Blind-faith" and "beliefs" refer to their reliance on mere second-hand information (e.g. from reading scripture,

We Got the Bible. One other important point is how and why the various books contained in the New Testament were chosen. There were more than 30 different Christian *gospels* (and many other Christian writings) in existence when the church (by then influenced by the Roman Emperor Constantine) made its final choices (e.g. the Gospels of Judas, Philip, Peter, Truth, Thomas, Hebrews, Mary Magdalene, etc. etc.), yet only four were finally accepted as, in its (i.e. *the bishops*) opinion, 'suitable.' The others were then labelled heretical, banned and destroyed. Constantine's influence over Christianity cannot be ignored. He is said to have become a Christian in the year 312; however, he was not baptized until shortly before his death in 337 – WHY? Previously he had been a 'solar henotheist,' believing that the Roman sun god, Sol, was the visible manifestation of an invisible "Highest God." Constantine intervened in ecclesiastical affairs to achieve unity - he (although not baptized) presided over the first ecumenical council of the church at Nicaea in 325. Epiphanius (c.315-c.403; Bishop of Salamis) wrote: "*The emperor (Constantine) felt concerned for the church, because by now many members often differed with one another and there were many schisms. He therefore convened an ecumenical council (Nicaea) of 318 bishops... And in a word, there was a great deal of controversy then. But through the blessed Constantine God(?) directed the right ordering of these things for the sake of peace.*" Quite frankly, Christianity, being a new religion, could easily be moulded to suit Constantine's needs in uniting his crumbling empire. He had the power to select and control the bishops – no one could oppose his wishes and remain in *his* legitimised ('orthodox') church. He made Sunday (honouring his pagan 'sun' god) the official day of worship (from the traditional Jewish/Christian Sabbath – Saturday). Jesus' birthday, too, was assigned to a popular Roman holiday, the birthday of Mithras (Dec.25)! Constantine was clearly no Christian; he merely used and moulded Christianity (*his* version) to suit his political ends.

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etc.), rather than *first-hand* 'Visionary' experiences of the Source Itself – of the Godhead (i.e. the 'Mystic' / 'Beatific Vision; Hebrew = *Shekhinah*). This is obviously because they do not themselves have such experiences, and are thus, by definition, Spiritually blind.¹⁸ When such people try to interpret the Spiritual writings of genuine 'Seers', the results are chaos and disunity, as may be seen by the present condition of all religions¹⁹ and the inhabitants of the whole world.

It has always been the case that genuine 'Seers' (i.e. Mystics, Gnostics²⁰, Prophets²¹, etc.) are mistrusted and condemned during their earthly life by the self-styled 'orthodox' religionists. The term 'orthodox' originally meant "correct opinion", but unfortunately it has come to

¹⁸ "They certainly have a zeal for God, but not according to [Divine] Knowledge (= Gnosis)." (ROM. 10:2). "When there is no Vision [of God] the people fall away [from Truth]." (PROV.29:18). "You ('believers') worship what you do not know; we (Gnostics) worship what we know." (JOHN 4:22). The very use of the term "believe" (the 'key-word' of all orthodoxies) testifies to a lack of Knowledge! cf. EZEK.13:3; MATT.15:14; & JOHN 3:11.

¹⁹ There are literally thousands of so-called 'Christian' sects, parties, and denominations (i.e. heresies = "choices") throughout the world – each having formulated its own particular beliefs, rituals, and doctrines; and each sincerely believing its own interpretations to be uniquely correct (i.e. 'orthodox').

²⁰ 'Gnosis' is a Greek word meaning "Knowledge" – not ordinary discursive knowledge (Greek: *episteme*) which can be expressed in words, but Transcendent, Divine (Mystic/esoteric) KNOWLEDGE of God. Thus, Gnostics are those who have such 'experiential' Knowledge, such as Moses, Elijah, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and all genuine Spiritual Masters. There were many pseudo-gnostic sects in early Christianity (as in all religions); however, in this study the term is used for *genuine* first-hand Knowledge of Truth / God – and to those who attain it.

²¹ Prophet = a 'Seer' (i.e. one who actually Sees God / the 'Beatific Vision'), see above, page 11, note 4, and also 1stSAM.9:9. It is erroneous to think that a Prophet sees or predicts *future* events; the concepts of time and space do not exist in genuine Spiritual consciousness. Thus, a true Prophet will only be concerned with revealing the eternal, universal, timeless, and unchanging Truth to their contemporaries. Those who predict the future are merely soothsayers, and are condemned in the Bible!

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mean the *majority* opinion, rather than that which is correct; this is, in fact, identical to the 'law of the jungle' – "might is right"! However, the genuine Spiritual Law is quite different: only a few discover the Truth – "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" (MATT.22:14). "*Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to Life, and only a few find it.*" (MATT.7:13-14).

The appellations 'Seer', 'Prophet', 'Visionary', 'Gnostic', etc, in their original Spiritual sense, imply someone who actually **sees**, 'face to face', and thus **knows** (in contrast to merely *believing in*) the True Spiritual Reality (viz. Elohim²² / God / Allah). Some people deny that God can actually be seen; and there are, indeed, certain passages of scripture which seem to support this view. However, there are many passages which clearly describe such "face to face" visions of God – both as an 'Ethereal Spirit', and as a 'Divine Human-being' or '**man-God**' (or 'God-man')! In fact, it is impossible to experience genuine Love without personal **Knowledge** (Gnosis) of God – the source of Love! It is all too common to mistake various emotional experiences for Love. For example, one may *admire, adore, worship, idolise*, etc. any variety of people, including religious heroes, both past and present, e.g. such men as Moses, Zarathustra, Krishna, Siddhartha (the Buddha of the sixth century BC), Jesus, Mohammed, Nanak, etc., but this is not genuine *Spiritual Love*; merely a common emotional / psychological experience known to us all. The Old Testament story of Job clearly illustrates the point in question. Job was initially a dedicated, sincere, and zealous 'believer' in God – just as so many religionists today and throughout history – but after a personal *visionary* experience, he admits: "**Previously I**

²² Elohim is the Hebrew (Old Testament) term translated into English as 'God'. The meaning of the word is explained later.

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[merely] ***believed that You (God) could do anything and that nothing was beyond Your power. But I spoke of things which I did not truly know, things too wonderful for my comprehension. I knew of You then only by what I was told, but now I have seen You with my own eyes, and am ashamed***" [of my previous ignorance, i.e. blind-faith and beliefs]. (JOB 42:2-6).

Such personal 'visionary' **Knowledge** of God (i.e. Gnosis) is spoken of throughout the scriptures of every great religion,²³ yet the *orthodox* attitude has always seemed to be (in practice) either that such experiences are not currently available, or that they should not be believed or relied upon. If anyone claims such Divine Revelation today they will either be ignored, or ridiculed and condemned by the orthodox elements of religion (not to mention atheists), just as Jesus and all genuine Gnostic Masters have been throughout history.²⁴ In their original form all religions were apocalyptic in nature (i.e. they relied totally on Divine Revelation through first-hand 'visionary' and/or 'audible' experiences of God Himself, rather than on the intellectual pursuits and conceptual proclamations of theologians and priests), but, with the passing of time, orthodoxy – the religion of the materialistic majority – took over. These orthodoxies were concerned mainly with ceremonial, intellectual, material, political, social and emotional issues. They provided for

²³ The Old Testament contains reports of more than ninety people who actually saw God 'face to face' *during* their lifetime on Earth!

²⁴ There are many biblical accounts of orthodox Hebrew religionists ridiculing, persecuting, and often killing disciples and Prophets of God (see e.g. EXOD.17:4; NUM.14:10-11; JOSH.7:25; 1stSAM.30:6; 2ndCHRON.24:19-21; NEH.9:26; JER.26:21; & AMOS 7:12-13). Jesus refers to them in MATT.23:31, before he, too, is killed. Orthodox Christianity took over this evil practice of persecuting and murdering so-called 'heretics' soon after gaining the support of the Roman administration during the fourth century AD; a practice which was only outlawed relatively recently after the torture and murders of countless thousands! What would Jesus say about this?

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the masses a *comfortable* (smooth) path to "salvation"²⁵ – one merely had to accept and abide with their (the hierarchy's) rulings,²⁶ give them a portion of your wealth, and "believe" in *their* version of God. These orthodoxies eventually became very powerful and wealthy, thus, through fear of losing their position of authority, they rejected (in practice) the possibility of any further 'Seers' (Gnostics) appearing on Earth, as well as any further Divine Revelations – as is demonstrated by their closing

²⁵ *"These are rebellious people, deceitful children, unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction. They say to the Seers, 'See no more visions'; and to the Prophets, 'Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us only pleasant things, prophesy illusions'."* (ISAIAH 30:9-10).

²⁶ The so-called 'orthodox' Christian creeds and doctrines are merely the developed and canonised ideas and beliefs of a *majority* of worldly bishops at various church councils, of which none have ever been unanimous. Such doctrines are simply "*the traditions and doctrines of men!*" (cf. MATT.15:9) and are based primarily on St. Paul's beliefs. Even so-called 'Fathers' and 'Saints' of the orthodox churches have disagreed over doctrine and venomously opposed one another; e.g. St Hippolytus (c.170-c.236) opposed certain doctrines of both St Zephyrinus (bishop of Rome 198-217) and St Callistus (bishop of Rome 217-222), and accused the latter of embezzling Christian funds. Hippolytus also set himself up as an anti-Pope (a rival bishop of Rome) in opposition to Callistus! St Irenaeus (c.140-c.202 – appointed bishop of Lyon in 177), whose opinions became very influential in the 'orthodox' church, venomously condemned anyone claiming to be gnostic (i.e. possessing first-hand (personal) *revealed Knowledge of God*). He argued that all spiritual authority is rooted in scripture and tradition and is expressed only through the living voice of the ('orthodox') church. He favoured four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) out of more than thirty Christian gospels which existed at that time (many being older than Luke's Gospel – see LUKE 1:1-2), on the basis that, "*as there are four corners (zones) of the Earth, and four principal winds, there should be only four gospels to be the four pillars of Christianity*" – a very strange reason for deciding the number of gospels to be considered worthy or 'canonical.' As a result we now possess very few of the many early Christian works which were eventually rejected and outlawed by the Roman Church. Those which have been discovered are mostly incomplete copies (e.g. badly damaged fragments) which had already been translated (perhaps poorly) from their original language (Aramaic or Greek) into Coptic and other languages. Some of these works are, indeed, mere childish nonsense; but some are more Spiritually valuable than any chosen for inclusion into the New Testament by a corrupt (materialistic) Roman Church.

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the canons of scripture and their condemnation of anyone claiming to have Divine Gnosis.²⁷ This is indeed the case in practice, yet in theory, every religion says it is waiting for the arrival of a great 'Mystic Master.' Unfortunately, many are expecting Him to be some kind of magical 'Superman,' who will 'fly through the sky' and lead His "chosen ones" to the Heavenly Kingdom! Such fanciful stories might appeal to the immature and childish (rather than *pure and childlike*) intellect, but have no bearing on Spiritual Reality. The Master has never, and will never, be recognised by such people with their many preconceived ideas, for they are too stubborn, proud, and blind – just as the majority of people at the time of Jesus.

By observing the histories of various religions, we may learn a great deal, through hindsight, of their various errors. The history of Christianity is very similar, as far as its internal development is concerned, to that of Judaism; and so, by researching both the 'Old' and 'New' Testaments, we may perceive the errors which have turned Christianity into a similar legalistic institution, and also gain a better understanding of Spiritual Truth.

²⁷ One of the reasons for such rejection is that all genuine Prophets condemn the errors and the 'outward' ritualistic pseudo-worship and 'lip-service' of orthodoxies – which are, at best, nothing more than humanitarian / social / ethical / intellectual / political institutions or 'fellowships', with no real Spiritual Knowledge (Gnosis)! See e.g. ISAIAH 29:13; 45:20; JER.2:8; 6:13-14; 8:10-11; LAM.2:14; EZEK.22:25-28; ZEPH.3:4; HOSEA 4:6; & MAL.2:7-9. "*Why do you misunderstand what I (Jesus) say? It is because you are unable to bear what I say [your ears are shut to My teaching]. You follow your father, the devil, and it is your will to practice the lusts and gratify the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar and the father of lies and of all that is false. But because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me.*" (JOHN 8:43-45).

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"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I behold the face of God?" (PSA.42:2).

Various Divine Messengers (Gr. *angelos*, i.e. *angels*) have been the channel for transmitting all Truth contained in religious scripture. Whether these Messengers are called Prophets, Seers, Angels, Anointed Ones (Hebrew = *Māshīah* (Messiahs), Greek = *Christos* (Christs)), Mystic or Gnostic Masters, etc., does not really matter – so long as they are not impostors! The fact that the Old Testament (and most other religious scriptures) contains numerous references to such divinely inspired human beings being physically present on Earth *throughout* its long history seems to suggest the *continual* necessity of a living Spiritual Master in order for the Truth to be revealed and truly experienced. If we examine a few of the relevant passages, a very clear picture comes to light.

Melchizedek is one of the earliest examples of a *Divine Priest-King* (= 'Messiah' or 'Christ')²⁸ named in the Bible. He lived at the time of Abram (= Abraham, i.e. approx. 2,000 BC). We are actually told more about him in the

²⁸ The title 'Messiah' is frequently used in the Hebrew (Old Testament) scriptures to denote various individuals; but in Christian versions of these texts the term is usually translated simply as "anointed one," rather than 'Messiah' or 'Christ' – designations which have become exclusively reserved for Jesus by savants of Christianity (See e.g. 1stSAM.2:35; 12:3ff; 16:6; 24:6ff; 26:9ff; 2ndSAM.1:14ff; 19:21; 22:51; 23:1; 1stCHRON.16:22; 2ndCHRON.6:42; PSA.2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 84:9ff; 105:15; 132:10ff; & ISAIAH 45:1). Even in transmitting the Hebrew name 'Yehoshua' (= 'Saviour'; usually translated into English as 'Joshua') – the original and correct name of 'Jesus' – the translators have been inconsistent (i.e. using the Greek: 'Jesus'), thus giving the impression to the majority of Christians that even his name (which should be translated 'Joshua' in order to be consistent) was unique to him! Cf. NUM.13:16, where Moses bestows the name (or title) 'Joshua' (Greek = Jesus, i.e. "Saviour") upon Hoshea. In addition, the *title* CHRIST (Messiah) is now commonly (and incorrectly) thought of and used as a *personal 'surname'* of Jesus!

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pages of the New Testament than in the canonical Old Testament:

"This Melchizedek, King of Peace, and Priest of God Most High, met Abram... and blessed him; and Abram gave him a tenth of all he had. His name means 'King of Righteousness', and he is King of Salem, which means 'King of Peace'. Without father or mother or lineage, his years have no beginning, his life no end, but like a Son of God, a [Divine] Priest dwells [on Earth] continually... For it has been declared (of King David): ***'You are a Priest forever in the eternal succession of Melchizedek.'***"²⁹ (HEB.7:1-3 & 17; cf. PSA.110:4, & GEN.14:18).

Such was the story told by the author of *Hebrews* to explain the position of Jesus and the existence of a continuous and eternal succession of Divine Priest-Kings (= Messiahs) living on Earth. This explanation is as valid today as it was in the first century, and clearly shows an element of the original understanding of some early Christians, i.e. of the genuine 'Apostolic' or 'Messianic' Succession appointed by God, rather than the 'orthodox' succession of bishops and priests appointed by men.³⁰

²⁹ This was said of King David (PSA.110:4). The Divine (God-appointed) Priesthood of Melchizedek is eternal, i.e. it must exist today! The members of this Priesthood are men appointed directly by God – not like the 'man-made' successions of popes, bishops, and priests of orthodoxy. It must be clearly understood that it is the succession that is eternal, not any individual member – otherwise Melchizedek himself would still be the Divine Priest, with no need for others such as David or Jesus! It is essential that we always have an authentic Spiritual Teacher living on Earth to reveal the Mysteries of God.

³⁰ Some contemporary Jewish groups (e.g. the Essenes) likewise believed Melchizedek to be an Eternal Saviour. He is also referred to as 'God' – just as Jesus was later to be identified; see e.g. G. Vermes, *THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN ENGLISH*; J. Charlesworth, *THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA*; and also *THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY*: 'Melchizedek' (Codex IX, 1), where Melchizedek is also equated with Jesus.

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Another interesting incident in Abraham's life, as reported in the Old Testament book of Genesis, is when three "men" visit him with a message from God. These men turn out to be the Lord (Hebrew = Yahweh) Himself and two "angels" (Greek = messengers). It is very clear from the narrative that these 'Divine' men (Yahweh and the angels) possessed quite normal human bodies:

"The Lord (Yahweh) came to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre as he was sitting at the door of his tent in the middle of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing before him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and bowed to the ground. 'My Lord', he said, 'if I have found favour with you, please do not pass me by. Let me send for water so that you may wash your feet and rest under a tree; and let me fetch some food so that you may refresh yourselves'... Abraham waited on them himself under the tree while they ate. They asked him where Sarah his wife was, and he told them that she was in the tent. Then his guest said: 'About this time next year I will come back to you, and Sarah your wife shall by then have a son'... The men then set out for Sodom, with Abraham accompanying them to show them the way." (GEN.18:1-16).

This passage explicitly describes the Lord (Yahweh) and two of His messengers (angels) as completely normal human beings (i.e. washing their feet, resting under a tree, eating, and talking) living on Earth at the time of Abraham, just as Jesus would approximately 2,000 years later. Note that Abraham immediately recognises the man he calls "my Lord." But what was the identity of this Divine man who visited Abraham? Could it have been Melchizedek? This seems to be the case according to the New Testament, for the previously quoted passage from *Hebrews* clearly equates the authority and status of Melchizedek with that of Jesus / the Lord (Yahweh), i.e. Melchizedek was considered to be a precursor of Jesus –

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a previous manifestation of the *Christ-Spirit* – an earlier ‘Messiah’. In addition, Jesus himself is reported as saying:

"Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it and was glad... I tell you truly, before Abraham was born, I am." (JOHN 8:56-58).

What Jesus means here is that He (i.e. his true *Spiritual* identity = the ‘*Christ-Spirit*’) manifests (i.e. ‘resurrects’ or ‘incarnates’) in a continual succession of human beings (i.e. *the eternal ‘succession of Melchizedek’*) in order to personally reveal the Truth to every generation of humanity, from the very beginning! Thus, before Abraham was born, He (the incarnation of the Christ-Spirit) was (and is) here in person: I am always here on Earth.³¹ That this is the true interpretation of this passage will become clear as we continue our study. Note, also, that the name ‘Jesus’ in Hebrew (viz. *Yehôshûa'* (Joshua)) means: *Yahweh saves*. The identification of this Divine Lord (*Yahweh*) as Melchizedek would also account for Abraham’s immediate recognition of him at Mamre – for Abraham had already met Melchizedek on a previous occasion (see GEN.14:17-20) when he (Abraham) had returned from defeating Kedorlaomer.

"Now consider how great this man (Melchizedek) was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tithe of all his wealth." (HEB.7:4) – for he was no less than an incarnation of the Lord Himself!

If we now move on to the time of Moses (approx. 1,300 BC), we find another Holy Messenger (angel) being sent by God to Israel:

"Behold! I (God) send a Messenger (= Angel) to you, to guide you on the Path, and to bring you to the place

³¹ For information concerning the Hebrew usage of the phrase ‘I AM’ (i.e. meaning the ever-present Messiah or man-god), see: D. Daube, *THE NEW TESTAMENT & RABBINIC JUDAISM*, part 3, ch. IX.

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which I have prepared (i.e. the Heavenly / Spiritual Kingdom). **Take heed of Him and listen to His voice. Do not defy Him; He will not pardon your rebelliousness, for My Name is in Him.**" (EXOD.23:20-21).

PEAKE'S COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE says of this passage: "(The author) here promises the companionship of 'an angel', who is, however, equivalent to God." It is a great mistake to think of an angel to be a supernatural or unearthly creature with wings,³² the word simply means a messenger, and can thus be attributed to all God's Prophets. However, the ZONDERVAN NIV BIBLE COMMENTARY states: "*The angel mentioned here cannot be Moses, God's messenger, or an ordinary(?) angel; for the expressions are too high for any of these: 'he will not forgive your rebellion' (who can forgive sin but God alone?) and 'My Name is in him.'* This must be the Angel of the Covenant, the Second Person of the Trinity." To say that the angel cannot be Moses, for the reasons given, demonstrates a typically biased Christian perception, i.e. *only Jesus could be considered this great!* Also, one might ask, what is "an ordinary angel"? However, we will later see that many, if not all the great Prophets of God (including Moses) had, in reality, equal status to that of Jesus; and that this passage does in fact refer to Moses!

Moving on to a later period (approx. 1,100 BC) we once again find the Israelites are reminded of the same 'eternal'

³² Originally, in traditional Israelite thought, angels (messengers of God) were simply Divinely Inspired human beings, thus they could easily be mistaken for 'ordinary' men (cf. HEB.13:2). Later, it was believed (by the uninitiated, who thought that Heaven/God is somewhere up in the sky) that these messengers from God would have to traverse to and from Heaven by the use of "ladders"/"stairs" (GEN.28:12). After the period of Israel's Babylonian exile (BC 597-538), Jewish thought about angels was considerably altered. Drawing on Mesopotamian beliefs, writers began to provide "wings," even for the anthropomorphic angels. An example of complete ignorance, which still persists amongst many.

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promise – of the perpetual succession of 'Holy Messengers'/'Divine Priests'/'Messiahs' who will walk with the genuine lovers of God for ever:

"I (God), Myself, will appoint a faithful Priest who will serve Me without question; and I will establish His succession to walk among you all (in the presence of everyone) as My Messiah for ever." (1st SAM.2:35).

Once again, the "faithful Priest" here is not one particular personage, but a Divine succession of those appointed by God (i.e. the Messianic succession of Melchizedek), which will exist forever.

In the book of ISAIAH there are two well-known passages referring to the birth of yet another *Divine* human being. Orthodox Christianity has traditionally interpreted these passages as *predictions* of the (then future) coming of Jesus. However, it is quite clear from the language and tense of these passages that the author is referring to his own time (i.e. several centuries BC) and proclaiming the currency of yet another incarnation of the 'Christ-Spirit':

"The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold! A young woman³³ is with child, and will bear a son. He will be called 'God is among us'" (Hebrew = 'immānū'ēl). (ISAIAH 7:14); then, a little later, the author clearly tells us of the contemporary birth (i.e. c.700 BC) of this 'Divine' child:

"A child has been born for us, a son given to us to

³³ The rendering "virgin" in some translations (e.g. the LXX and many English / Christian versions) is incorrect; for this, the Hebrew 'bethulah' would have been used! The actual word employed here – 'almah' – simply means a 'young woman'. This error, originally made in the Greek 'Septuagint' translation of the Old Testament (c. 3rd Century BC), which was used by early Greek speaking Christians, was the source of the myth of Jesus being born of a virgin (i.e. in order, as they thought, to make Him fulfil scripture)! It is important to note that the authors of the earliest New Testament books (i.e. the genuine Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of Mark) know nothing of a virgin birth, neither is it mentioned in the Gospel of John!

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***bear the symbol of dominion on his shoulder; and he shall be called: 'Wonder Counsellor', 'Mighty God', 'Eternal Father', 'Prince of Peace'.*" (ISAIAH 9:6).**

Reputable biblical scholars now agree that ISAIAH 7:14 refers to a 'sign' (not a prediction) during the contemporary period of Isaiah; it does not refer to the birth of Jesus more than seven hundred years later (although Jesus would indeed be a member of this same line of Masters). ISAIAH 9:6 clearly testifies to this 'Mighty God' – the 'God among us' – being born as a human being (hereafter referred to simply as a "man-god"³⁴) during Isaiah's lifetime, i.e. several centuries *before* the birth of Jesus. Then again, he states:

***"Your Masters (Divine Teachers) will no longer be hidden from sight, but with your own eyes you may see Them [always!]."* (ISAIAH 30:20).**

PEAKE'S COMMENTARY states of this passage: "Yahweh (the Lord) *Himself shall be the teacher.*" Indeed He shall be (and is) – but note the plural of *Masters*, and the promise that they may be "seen."

The following passage, also from Isaiah, once again clearly describes this Divine 'Servant' / 'Chosen One' / Messiah of God being present on Earth during the time of

³⁴ The term "man-god" is used many times in the Hebrew Scriptures (translated into English as "man of God") of such men as Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Shemaiah, Igdaliah, David, and many other unnamed individuals. "Now a man-god came to Eli and said to him (thus saith the Lord): 'Did I not reveal Myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? And did I not choose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest...?'" (1stSAM.2:27-28). When the correct translations of such passages are seen, it is very simple to understand that the man-god (or 'man-of-God') is, in fact, the Lord Himself! See also DEUT.33:1; JOSHUA 14:6; JUDGES 13:6; 1stSAM.9:6; 1stKINGS 12:22; 13:1; 17:18-24; 2ndKINGS 1:9-13; 4:9; 5:8; 2ndCHRON.8:14; JER.35:4. Today the term 'man of God' has become so mundane that it is commonly used of any so-called 'religious' person – not so in ancient times!

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Isaiah (i.e. several centuries before the birth of Jesus):
"Here is My Servant whom I (God) uphold, My 'Chosen One' in whom My Spirit delights. I have endowed Him with My Spirit so that He may bring true Justice to the nations." (ISAIAH 42:1).

The ASBURY BIBLE COMMENTARY states of this section of ISAIAH: "In these chapters (40-55) are four servant songs, so-called because of their particular reference to God's servant (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). The exact identity of the servant has been intensely debated. Mentioned are (i.) historical figures such as **Moses, Jeremiah, and Cyrus**; (ii.) **an ideal figure of the past, present, and/or future**; (iii.) the nation of Israel itself; (iv.) and the remnant of Israel in Babylon. The best explanation centres around the Hebrew concept of corporate personality, which subsumes the individual and a group under one reality with little distinction between the two (cf. Rowley). This idea best explains the interrelationship of the **singular and plural references to the servant**. Evangelical interpreters will disagree as to the role of the servant vis-à-vis Jesus Christ. It seems clear, however, that Jesus himself and the early church understood his mission to be the fulfilment of the servant role. Note that Matthew quotes this passage (ISAIAH 42:1-4) in its entirety (MATT.12:18-21). That Isaiah looked specifically to the person of Jesus several hundred years in the future may be doubted. Rather, he saw an idealized representative as the servant." (emphasis mine). If by "corporate personality" is meant a continual succession (group) of Divinely Inspired Servants of God manifesting One Spiritual Reality (e.g. the Succession of Melchizedek), then it is a fair comment. Also, that Isaiah made any specific reference to Jesus is definitely to be rejected – even though Jesus would indeed be one of these Divine Servants of God.

From the next passage, we learn that a Divine Servant or

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man-god (a contemporary of the author of *ISAIAH*) was despised and rejected by the vast majority, as has always been the case with genuine Masters throughout history – as, indeed, would be the case with Jesus several centuries later:

"He grew up before us like a young plant in parched ground; He had no beauty, no majesty, no outward appearance to attract us. He was despised and rejected by men... He was despised and we took no notice of Him." (ISAIAH 53:2-3).

Christians today find it hard to comprehend how Jesus was rejected and despised during His lifetime by the general population – how could they not recognise Him? Most today do not even question whether they would have recognised Jesus as the Messiah if they had been there. We imagine Jesus to have been handsome and outwardly glowing with light, as portrayed by artists throughout history, but these images are completely false. In reality, it is not so easy to recognise and put one's faith in a *current living Master*, whose outward appearance is very ordinary, and whose background might be as lowly and simple as a carpenter.

In the following passage, we read the author's own claim, that it is he, himself, who is now the Lord's Anointed – that he is now the Messiah:

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners." (ISAIAH 61:1).

There is much scholarly disagreement whether the book of Isaiah is the work of one or more authors. Whoever was the author of this verse does not matter now. All that really matters is that we understand that there were many different Messiahs in a long succession right up to our

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own time. It is therefore only the *current* living Master which should be our concern, for it is only He who can help us – *who are currently on Earth!*

Turning to another source – the so-called 'apocryphal' or 'deutero-canonical' book of *BARUCH* – which was written around the second century BC, we find more evidence of the ever-present man-god / Divine Master:

"Say in your hearts: Master, it is you that we must worship. For My (God's) Messenger is with you; your lives are in His care." (BARUCH 6:5-6).

Because a long history of erroneous teachings by various supposed 'orthodox' religious authorities have blinded us (the majority) to Spiritual Truth (especially the false belief that Jesus was the first, last, and only incarnation of the Holy Spirit to appear on Earth), it is therefore necessary to repeat and stress the reality of a continual succession of Divine men or 'Christs' (i.e. god-men) who manifest God's Spirit right here on Earth to every generation of mankind! Sir James Frazer, in his monumental study of magic and religion, *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*, states: "*The notion of a man-god, or a human being endowed with divine or supernatural powers, belongs essentially to that earlier period of religious history in which gods and men are still viewed as beings of much the same order, and before they are divided by the impassable gulf which, to later thought, opens out between them. Strange, therefore, as may seem to us the idea of God incarnate in human form, it has nothing very startling for early man.*" This passage precisely describes the situation in question, and it clearly demonstrates the typical blindness of religious scholars and teachers. Frazer here fails to recognise that the notion of a 'man-god' is just as widespread now as ever; for is this not the very belief of every Christian today? –

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i.e. that Jesus was a (or "the") 'man-god'³⁵! It is certainly true that modern orthodox Jews and Muslims will dismiss the idea of a man-god, although most will admit to believing in many previous Divine Prophets or 'Angels', and many to a future Messiah or Mahdi. The Hebrew Bible, relevant to both former groups, contains references to many 'mysterious' holy men, such as Melchizedek, existing throughout its long history. Many other Religions today believe in a succession of Enlightened Masters or god-men – known variously as Avatars (in Hinduism), Buddhas (= Enlightened ones), etc. Let us move on to another relevant passage from the Old Testament:

"The Messenger (Angel) of the Lord met her (Hagar) near a spring of water in the wilderness... and she called the Lord (Yahweh) who spoke to her El roi,³⁶ for, she said: I have here seen God." (GEN.16:7 & 13).

The first thing to note here is the fact that initially Hagar's meeting is described as being with a messenger (or 'angel') of the Lord, and that later it is with the Lord (Yahweh) Himself! This may be accounted for by one of three possibilities: (i) an error in recording the story; (ii) a later realisation by Hagar that the man who met her was not merely a messenger of the Lord, but the Lord Himself; or (iii) that the titles 'angel (messenger) of God' and 'Lord' (Yahweh) were considered by Hagar and/or the author (or later editor / copyist) of the passage to be synonymous.

³⁵ In reality, Frazer is correct, for most Christians today could not really comprehend or accept a contemporary man-god like Jesus living amongst them, and would find the idea very strange indeed – just as the Jews did at the time of Jesus.

³⁶ Hebrew = 'God vision' or 'visible God.' It is interesting to note that many Hebrew names of God's Messengers / Representatives have significant meanings, e.g. Elisha = 'man-god' or 'God's man'; Michael = 'God's likeness'; Isaiah = 'Saviour-Lord'; Elijah = 'God's Lord'; Eli = 'my God'; Elihu = 'God is he'; Haziel = 'Visible God'; Uriel = 'Light of God'; Pethuel = '[Spiritual] Food of God'; Gabriel = 'Thunder of God'; Phanuel = 'Face of God'; etc.

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Such ambiguity appears often in the Hebrew scriptures,³⁷ as will be observed during this study; however, the important point to recognise from this passage is the fact that Hagar, like so many other people throughout history, actually meets 'face to face' a Divine human-being or 'man-god' in the flesh!

Before continuing, it is important that we have a clear understanding of the correct meanings and relevance of the two Hebrew appellations – 'ELOHIM' and 'YAHWEH' – which are used throughout the Old Testament, and normally translated into English as 'GOD' and 'the LORD' respectively. ELOHIM is a plural word meaning '*ethereal powers*' (i.e. the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent *Essence / Spirit* of God); while YAHWEH means '*Divine presence*' or '*Spiritual manifestation*' / '*being*' ("HE WHO IS [GOD]") – i.e. the Lord, man-god, Christ, or Divine Teacher who continuously reappears on Earth (i.e. '*resurrects*' / '*reincarnates*')³⁸ in order to reveal, *personally*, the Holy Spirit (i.e. 'Elohim') to His 'elect' / 'chosen ones' of *every* generation. Traditional orthodox scholars, who reject the possibility of God (the Spirit) being continually incarnate on Earth, have various theories about the origins and meanings of these two terms. Some believe these

³⁷ It was common for later orthodox editors of the Old Testament (as well as other scriptures) to replace original anthropomorphic descriptions of God by other terms, such as 'angel' (i.e. 'messenger'). It is now widely agreed by scholars that the term 'angel of Yahweh' was a common synonym for Yahweh (the Lord) Himself!

³⁸ For details of Jewish and early Christian belief in a continual reincarnation of the same Divine Prophet, see Oscar Cullmann, *CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*. Note, also, that resurrection means: 'to rise again'; while reincarnation means: '(the soul) entering flesh again'. Thus, either term is equally suitable for describing the post crucifixion appearances of the Christ. However, orthodox Christianity has always denied the possibility of reincarnation! But consider the case of John the Baptist, whom Jesus apparently identified with Elijah (MATT.11:14), and, if so, John must certainly have been a reincarnation of Elijah!

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two Hebrew expressions for 'God' and 'the Lord' to be identical in meaning, and to have originated from two separate sources of tradition, each of which used a different term to identify God. This theory is based on the fact that there are two creation stories recorded in the book of Genesis, the first of which (GEN.1:1 to 2:4) uses only the name ELOHIM (the *Spirit* or *Essence* of God), while the second account (GEN.2:4 to 3:24) uses the combined names YAHWEH ELOHIM (the *incarnation* of the *Spirit* of God) throughout. Some scholars assume that these two accounts are merely two *different* versions of a *single* creation, which were later compiled and edited by scribes into the form now present in the Bible. Although it must be conceded that these stories are not in their original form, it must also be noted that it would not make sense for any editor of what was to be considered the '*truth*' or '*word of God*' to allow two conflicting accounts of a *single* creation to exist in the same scroll (*book*), especially in such close proximity as to follow consecutively.³⁹ It seems more probable that the first account, in which ELOHIM (the Spiritual Essence) is described as the creator, originally referred to the creation of the perfect *Spiritual* world which was supposed to have existed before the 'fall' (viz. the 'Promised land' or 'Garden of Eden' from which mankind was banished), while the second story, in which YAHWEH ELOHIM (the 'Lord-God' = 'man-god') is portrayed as the creator, refers to our 'natural'/'physical' world in which the man-God actually resides in order to help mankind return to their true home – the first created *Spiritual* abode. Other scholars believe that the term YAHWEH (the LORD) is the "personal" and "covenantal" name of God, while ELOHIM is His "generic" name, which depicts God's relationship to all creation. However, there is a simple fact which supports the case that these two Hebrew names have very specific

³⁹ There are examples in the Old Testament of stories that are retold with differing details, but rarely in the same book, and never consecutively!

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meanings – the fact that the majority of Old Testament books use both terms (ELOHIM and YAHWEH), and each in specific circumstances.⁴⁰ It must also be admitted that there are passages where these terms are used in a rather arbitrary and ambiguous fashion – but this is probably due to a later editor's ignorance of the original meanings. Nevertheless, scholars of these texts now widely agree that the so-called 'Yahwist' passages clearly present an *anthropomorphic* God, or, a '*man-god*'! Returning now to relevant passages in the Old Testament, the following is from the book of DEUTERONOMY:

"Yahweh Elohim (the Lord God) will raise up for you another Prophet like me (Moses) from among you – one of your brothers; to him you must listen." (DEUT.18:15).

Here we are informed that God Himself will appoint another human being from the brotherhood of 'Seers' (i.e. the true 'Israel'⁴¹) to succeed Moses in the eternal office of Divine Prophet / Priest-King / Spiritual Leader (i.e. the 'succession of Melchizedek'). That Moses' position and authority was, during his lifetime, identical to that of Jesus (i.e. the man-god / Divine Prophet / Messiah) will become clear from studying the following passages:

⁴⁰ In the New Testament, the Hebrew terms 'Elohim' and 'Yahweh' are referred to as the 'Father' and 'Son' respectively. Both titles refer to the ONE reality – God – but each identify a particular aspect of the ONE (i.e. the 'Spirit' and the 'perfect incarnation' of the Spirit). The third part of the New Testament 'Trinity' – the 'Holy Spirit' – simply refers to the Divine Essence which resides deep within every human being, and which may be revealed on an individual basis through the grace of a living Master, by Mystic initiation i.e. by the 'laying on of hands' = the 'Fire Baptism' (see MATT.3:11). N.B. This will be fully explained in the next chapter.

⁴¹ The original / Spiritual meaning of 'Israel' is "one who sees God" – from three Hebrew words: 'ish (= a 'man' / 'intelligent being'); 'ra'eh (= 'seeing'); and 'el (= 'God' / 'Supreme Spirit') – as recognised by Philo Judaeus and others. This is further confirmed by its initial use as a name / title for Jacob after his "face to face" vision of God (GEN.32:28-30). The term 'Israelites' originally referred to 'Spiritual Seers'/'Gnostics' – not a racial identity – thus are they called 'chosen' and 'beloved of God.'

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"**Moses called all the Israelites and said to them: 'You have seen all the things that your Lord did before your eyes in Egypt... all those signs and great wonders! But to this day, you have no heart to know your Lord, no eyes to see, no ears to hear! I (Moses) have led you for forty years in the wilderness... that you might know that I (Moses) am the Lord your God.'**" (DEUT.29:2-6). Then, a little later: "**See now that I (Moses), I AM HE; there is no other God but me!**" (DEUT.32:39).

Although both Jewish editors and Christian translators of the texts have continuously hidden the fact of the Eternal Messianic Succession, careful observation and comparisons can often recover the original meaning. It should be clear that both the above passages are reported to be the words spoken by Moses to the Israelites – Moses who performed the many miracles in Egypt, who led the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness – and they clearly show him claiming to be the *man-god* of that period. With this understanding in mind, it is not difficult to realise what is meant by the following verse:

"**Elohim** (the Spirit of God) **said to Moses** (i.e. communicated deep within the heart of Moses): '**I am who I am'; this is what you (Moses) must say to the Israelites: 'I, myself, am sent to you'.**' (EXOD.3:14).

Here the 'Voice' of God – *the still, silent, inner voice* – is relating, deep within the heart of Moses, that it is he – *Moses himself* – who has been chosen as the *Divine Messenger* of Elohim (i.e. the Lord or man-god), and so this wonderful revelation is expressed in the familiar form: '**I AM**'. Thus, Moses must tell the Israelites: "**I am who I am; I, myself, am sent to you!**"⁴² In the passage which

⁴² The false interpretations, confusion, and rejection of the simple truth of these 'Moses' passages (and many others) are truly amazing. The Jews, and later the Christians, rejected the fact that Moses was a Divine Master (man-god) in the same category as Jesus, and so tried to demote

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follows this description of Moses' inner revelation and command to inform the Israelites, Moses explains that he is not a fluent speaker, and therefore not suitably qualified to be a spokesman of God (Elohim – the Spirit). However, it is revealed to him that his brother Aaron, who is a good speaker, should be his mouthpiece and say whatever Moses commands. Moses is then described as (a) God (i.e. the man-god – Yahweh):

"You (Moses) will speak to him (Aaron) and reveal what he must say, and I (Elohim = the Spirit) shall help you both and reveal what you must do. He (Aaron) must speak on your behalf to the people; he will be your mouth, and you (Moses) will be his God." (EXOD.4:15-16).

"Yahweh (read: God) said to Moses: 'See, I have made you (Moses) the God of Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your Prophet.'" (EXOD.7:1).

The translators of these passages have tried to hide the fact of Moses' true designation (the "man-god") and added words (e.g. "*like*" or "*seem like*" or "*as*" or "*as if*" God) which are not in the Hebrew! A little later we find the account of Moses receiving the Divine Law from Elohim on Mount Sinai, and then going down to transmit it to the people:

"So Moses went down to the people and said to them: [and Elohim spoke all these words⁴³] 'I (Moses⁴⁴) am the Lord God who brought you out of Egypt... you shall have no other god except me!'" (EXOD.19:25 – 20:3).

Here, again, we have a clear proclamation – when correctly interpreted – that Moses was the Lord (Yahweh)

him in any way possible. In fact, the Jews still dismiss Jesus in the same way.

⁴³ This is an editorial addition to the text, for orthodoxy could not have Moses claiming that he was the Lord.

⁴⁴ N.B. It is from Moses' own mouth that these words issue: – "I am the Lord God who brought you out of Egypt."

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of that period. There is another interesting story about Moses contained in EXODUS, which parallels the New Testament account of Jesus' transfiguration:

"When Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, they were amazed to see that his face shone brightly, and they were afraid to go near him." (EXOD.34:30; cf. MATT.17:2).

These various 'Moses' passages, when observed together and interpreted correctly, clearly describe Moses as a man-god, and thus put him in the same category as Melchizedek, Jesus, and, as we will later see, many others.⁴⁵ E.R. Goodenough, in his study *BY LIGHT, LIGHT*, recounts that some forms of 'Mystic' Judaism around the time of Jesus believed that all the Patriarchs "had ascended the (Light) Stream to the Logos, and were God's 'loans' to help other men, Jews and proselytes, to come to the same vision. Indeed some of them, especially Moses, were incarnations of the Logos." Thus, we begin to see that similar beliefs relating to Jesus were by no means unique or original.⁴⁶ It is now widely agreed

⁴⁵ Further evidence of Moses' identification as Yahweh is contained in EXODUS 6:6-9, where God (i.e. Elohim = the Spirit) once again tells Moses to inform the Israelites that it is he (Moses) who is the Lord (Yahweh) who will rescue them from Egypt. Other passages also show the same when correctly interpreted, e.g. *"This is what the Lord says: By this you will know that I am the Lord: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood."* (EXOD.7:17). Who was holding the staff, and who struck the waters of the Nile?? Was it not MOSES HIMSELF? So who was the Lord of that time? Of course it was MOSES! Again, why was it necessary for Moses to raise his hand to part the waters of the Red Sea (EXOD.14:16) – surely God could have done this without any action from Moses. However, Moses was the Lord, and so it required His action.

⁴⁶ Many stories about Jesus have close parallels with previous stories of Moses: as a new-born, Moses was hidden by his mother because of Pharaoh's command that all male Hebrew infants were to be killed (EXOD.1:15-22; cf. MATT.2:16); Moses communed with God for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness (EXOD.24:18 & 34:28; cf. MATT.4:1-2); he chose twelve helpers (NUM.1:4-15; cf. MARK 3:14); he

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by savants of the Old Testament that various ancient Hebrew authorities rejected any anthropomorphic descriptions of God recorded in their scriptures, and thus tried to eradicate such references by modification or omission.⁴⁷ This orthodox Jewish attitude is displayed to this very day in their general attitude towards Jesus. It is more than possible that all the great Prophets of Israel were originally understood (during their lifetimes) to be Messiahs or God-men by their close disciples. The following passage from NEHEMIAH contains a general description of the situation which we are presently studying:

"They (the majority or 'orthodox' Hebrew religionists)

rode into Egypt on an ass; his face shone brightly after communing with God (EXOD.34:29-30; cf. MATT.17:2); he also performed many miracles, as many other prophets (see e.g. 1stKINGS 17:17-24, where Elijah revives a dead boy; and 2ndKINGS 4:42-44, Elisha feeds a multitude). In fact, there is hardly a detail in the recorded life of Jesus that does not have an exact parallel in one or more older stories of other Divine men. Mithraism, a Persian religion (originating many centuries before Christ) which became very popular in the Roman Empire, was similar to Christianity in many respects, e.g. baptism, the rite of communion, the use of holy water, the adoration by shepherds at Mithra's birth, the adoption of Sundays and of December 25 (Mithra's birthday) as holy days, and the belief in the immortality of the soul, the last judgment, and the resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is also prefigured in many other ancient religions, e.g. the Babylonian account of the death and resurrection of the god Tammuz; the Egyptian belief that Osiris came back to life after being killed; the Greek story of the death and return to life of Dionysus; and the Phrygian tale of the death and resurrection of Attis.

⁴⁷ There were certain groups of Jews who rejected the orthodox 'demotion' of Moses, and retained the belief in his (and others) Divinity. Aspects of such beliefs are contained in various apocryphal Jewish writings, e.g. '*ARTAPANUS*' – preserved by Eusebius in his *PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA* 9:27:6; The *SIBYLLINE ORACLES* 8:251-254; *TESTAMENT OF MOSES* 1:14 & 11:1-19; *LIVES OF THE PROPHETS* 2:14; *DEBARIM RABBAH* 11:10; see also Philo's *VIT MOS* 1:158; Clement of Alexandria's *STROM.* vi. 15; and D Daube's *THE NEW TESTAMENT AND RABBINIC JUDAISM* part 1, ch. 2.

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were defiant and rebelled against You (God); they turned their backs on Your Law and killed Your Prophets who warned them to return to You... in Your great compassion You sent them Saviours... Many years were You patient with them and warned them by Your Spirit through Your Prophets; but they would not listen.” (NEH.9:26-30).

This passage again informs us that various 'Saviours', long before the time of Jesus, were sent to guide the people to salvation, but they, too, received the time honoured welcome of orthodoxy!

“Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for I have now seen with my own eyes the King – the Lord of Hosts.” (ISAIAH 6:5). Compare this with JOB 42:5-6.

These words proclaim Isaiah's recognition of the man-god of his day, and his feeling of shame due to his previous ignorance and blind-faith in following the mere traditions and beliefs of religion – a similar experience to that of Job, as we saw earlier.

“That day (i.e. when one is released from ignorance and blind beliefs), man will look to his creator and his eyes will turn to the Holy One of Israel. He will no longer look to the altars which he has set up, nor to anything that his hands have made.” (ISAIAH 17:7-8).

Once again Isaiah speaks of the time when the genuine realisation of Truth personally dawns on anyone, and when he or she will thus turn to the current 'Holy One' (i.e. a living man-god) and reject the false materialistic / exoteric worship, beliefs, superstitions, and traditions of all orthodox historic religions – "the teaching and traditions of men"!

“This is a rebellious people, lying children who will

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not listen to the Lord's instructions. To the Seers they say: 'See no visions'; and to the Prophets: 'Do not reveal the Truth to us; rather give us flattering words and false visions; turn aside from the way, leave the path, and take the Holy One out of our sight!'" (ISAIAH 30:9-11).

This is another clear example of how orthodox religionists reject the current Spiritual 'visions' of Seers and revelations of contemporary Prophets. They do not want to know the Truth, which would refute their selfish desires and lusts; they simply want to hear flattering words from their Spiritually blind ministers of an imaginary 'orthodox' god! Such people reject the possibility of a genuine 'Holy One' (man-god) being among them, they do not even want to hear of such things. This is the attitude of the vast majority of people in the world today – as it has always been.

"You, My servants, are My witnesses, says the Lord (Yahweh), you who I have chosen, that you may know Me and put your faith in Me and understand that I AM HE... I, yes, I am Yahweh (the man-god), and there is no other Saviour... You are My witnesses, says Yahweh, that I AM GOD." (ISAIAH 43:10-12).

These are the words of a living man-god to His chosen disciples several centuries BC. Jesus is reported to have said the same to His followers during His reign on Earth, as, indeed, have all such 'Saviours' in the 'eternal succession' of Melchizedek!

"Hear this: from the very beginning I (Yahweh) have never spoken obscurely, I have been present from the start, even now (i.e. several centuries BC) God (Elohim) sends Me with His Spirit!" (ISAIAH 48:16).

A clearer statement of the fact of an ever-present man-god / Messiah would be difficult to make. Unfortunately

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the ignorance, and selfish, monopolistic desires of various self-styled 'orthodoxies' have masked the Truth from the majority since the beginning of history.

"Why did I (Yahweh) find no one when I came? Why did no one answer when I called? Did you think that My arm was too short to redeem, and that I had no power to save?" (ISAIAH 50:2).

Yet again, we have a quote from the man-god during the time of Isaiah. As always, the current (living) incarnation of the Lord is ignored or rejected by the majority. Only historic incarnations are ever recognised, respected and worshipped by the masses. However, only the present 'living' Master can reveal the Sacred Mysteries of the Spirit, and actually lead His disciples to ALL TRUTH. Of course an 'historic' Master, and silent, ambiguous scriptures are always preferable to the selfish, to materialists, to religious pretenders, and to the deluded who wish to follow "*their own ways*" – for an historic Master cannot reprehend them, and words of scripture can easily be ignored or bent to suit one's own desires!

"On that day – when My people know My Holy Name – they will understand that it is I who says: 'I AM HERE'... for they shall SEE YAHWEH 'FACE TO FACE'!" (ISAIAH 52:6-8).

By now, the interpretation of this verse should be clear. It further supports the fact of the continual presence of a man-god on Earth. The reference to the 'Holy Name' of God is also extremely important and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

"All your sons will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace." (ISAIAH 54:13).

"I (Yahweh) was there, ready to be approached by a

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people who did not ask, ready to be found by them who did not seek Me. I said: 'HERE I AM, HERE I AM', to a nation that did not invoke My Name. All day I stretched out My hands to a rebellious people who pursued evil, and choose their own ways; a people who provoked Me continually to My face." (ISAIAH 65:1-3).

It is not necessary to comment on this verse; it should be quite clear what is being said. Having now seen an extensive selection of quotations from Isaiah demonstrating the continual existence of a living man-god, we will move on to passages from other 'Old Testament' books which reinforce the same fact.

"I (God) will give you (Spiritual) Shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you with Knowledge and Understanding." (JER.3:15).

Note here that it is not just *ONE* Shepherd (e.g. Jesus) which God promises. These Shepherds will not teach mere belief and dogma, but will feed there followers with genuine Knowledge (Gnosis) and Understanding!

"Son of man (Ezekiel), rise up; I (Elohim – the Spirit) am going to speak to you. As He spoke, the Spirit entered me and raised me up; and I heard His Word. He said: 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have turned against Me... Say to them: 'My (i.e. Ezekiel's) words are the words of the true Lord – Yahweh'; and they, whether they listen or not – for they are rebels – will soon know that there was a Prophet among them." (EZEK.2:1-5).

This passage describes Ezekiel's call to the service of the Spirit of God (i.e. Elohim), when the Spirit manifested within him and enlightened him to his task. Such events are common to all Divine Messengers, including Jesus at the time of his baptism by John (see MATT.3:16-17). Like

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Ezekiel and many others, Jesus also used the title 'Son of man' – which indicates the entirely human frame of the man-god.

"Everyone who has rebelled against Me (God – the Spirit)... and then returns to seek the Prophet to enquire of God, I, Yahweh, will answer him Myslef." (EZEK.14:4).

Here we are told that the Lord (Yahweh) will give a personal reply to all those who, after initial rebellion (e.g. through ignorance or rejection), return to search for the true Prophet in order to enquire about God (the Spirit). This statement provides more evidence of the fact that we must seek the present living Prophet / Master / man-god / Christ in order to obtain first-hand Knowledge of Truth.

"Now the day of reckoning has arrived, the day of retribution has come. But the people say: 'This Prophet is a fool, this man is mad'. They say this because he shows them their great guilt." (HOSEA 9:7).

Here Hosea is proclaiming the same ancient message: *The day of the Lord is always NOW – the PRESENT!* He is also greeted with the familiar jeers of the orthodox materialists who do not want to know the truth – the same jeers that many will extend to the contents of this very work of interpretation.

"For I am God, no ordinary man, but the Holy One in your midst." (HOSEA 11:9).

Yet again, the words of the man-god show that, although he appears outwardly to be a very ordinary man, he is, in fact, the manifestation of God. Before moving on to the New Testament period there follows a selection of passages from Hebrew works – both canonical and apocryphal – which are relevant to our present subject,

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and which should, by now, require no comment. It should be remembered that all these passages were written before the time of Jesus, and describe a number of different 'Saviours', each one a contemporary of the particular author:

"See now that I (Yahweh) am with you, and will protect you wherever you go... Then Jacob woke from his sleep [of ignorance] and said: 'Truly Yahweh is in this place (i.e. here on Earth), and I did not know it.'" (GEN.28:15-16).

"I (Yahweh) dwell among the children of Israel, and am their God." (EXOD.29:45).

"I (Yahweh) will walk among you; I will be your God, and you shall be My people." (LEV.26:12).

"With him (Moses) I (God) speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord." (NUM.12:8).

"They (initiated disciples) know that Yahweh is among His people, for Yahweh is seen face to face." (NUM.14:14).

"Do not defile the land in which you live, the very land in which I (Yahweh) also live: for I, Yahweh, dwell among the children of Israel." (i.e. genuine 'Gnostics' or 'Seers'). (NUM.35:34).

"Joshua said to the children of Israel: 'Come close and hear the Word of Yahweh your God; thus you will know that a living God is among you'. " (JOSHUA 3:9-10).

"When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a sword in his

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hand. Joshua went up to him and asked: 'Are you with us, or our enemies?' And he answered: 'No, I am the Leader (Commander) of Yahweh's host, and now I have come.' Joshua then bowed his face to the ground and worshipped him." (JOSHUA 5:13-14).

"The Lord raised up a Saviour – Othniel, the son of Kenaz – for the children of Israel, in order to save them. The Spirit of Yahweh entered him, and he judged Israel... and Othniel died... then the Lord raised up another Saviour – Ehud, the son of Gera." (JUDGES 3:9-15).

"Let the trees of the forest give praise at the presence of Yahweh, for He has come to judge the world." (1stCHRON.16:33).

"I (Job) know that my Saviour lives, and to the very end He will rise up (i.e. resurrect / reincarnate) on Earth; and even if my skin is destroyed (by his disease), yet in my flesh I will see God – I myself will see Him with my own eyes." (JOB 19:25-27).

"You (God) prolong the King's (Messiah's) life: His years carry on from generation to generation. He abides [on Earth] forever in the sight of God." (PSA.61:6-7).

"He (the Divine King / Messiah) will continue [to live on Earth] as long as the sun endures, and for as long as the moon, from generation to generation." (PSA.72:5 – LXX version).

"Rejoice at the presence of Yahweh, for He is come, He is come to judge the world." (PSA.96:13).

"Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face

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evermore.” (PSA.105:4).

“Cry out and shout for joy, you inhabitants of Zion, for great is He who is among you – the Holy One of Israel.” (ISAIAH 12:6).

“Tell the cities of Judah: Your God is here! Behold, the Lord Yahweh has come with power.” (ISAIAH 40:9-10).

“I am Yahweh – there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, in some dark place of the Earth. I did not speak vainly when I told the descendants of Jacob to seek Me.” (ISAIAH 45:18-19).

“If you call, Yahweh will answer you; cry out, and He will say: ‘I am here.’” (ISAIAH 58:9).

“The Angel of His (God's) presence saved them. In His love and mercy He redeemed them; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.” (ISAIAH 63:9).

This verse clearly states that God had a 'messenger' (angel) / 'Saviour' / 'Redeemer' who represented His presence on Earth ALL the days of old – i.e. *throughout all history!*

“I (God – the Spirit) continually send you My servants the Prophets, but you do not listen to Me, you pay no heed; you have grown stubborn and behave even worse than your ancestors.” (JER.7:25-26).

“I, Myself, will tend My flock, says Yahweh... They will learn that I, the Lord God, am with them.” (EZEK.34:15-30).

“You will know that I am present among Israel, and that I am Yahweh your God, and no one else.” (JOEL

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2:27).

"Behold! The Lord comes forth from His Holy dwelling; He comes down to walk upon the heights of the Earth." (MICAH 1:3).

"The King of Israel, Yahweh Himself, is in your midst." (ZEPH.3:15).

"Sing and rejoice... for I, Yahweh, have come to dwell among you." (ZECH.2:10).

"Rejoice... Look! Now your King is coming to you. He is a Righteous Saviour, humble, and riding on an ass." (ZECH.9:9).

"This is our God, no other can compare with Him. He discovered the fullness of Knowledge and revealed it to His servant Jacob, and to His beloved Israel (i.e. 'initiates' or 'Seers'). This is why He appears on Earth and dwells among men." (BARUCH 3:36-38).

"Look for the coming of your Shepherd; He will give you everlasting rest, for He who comes to fulfil the age is close at hand. Be ready to receive the rewards of the Kingdom... I bear witness publicly to my Saviour. It is He whom the Lord has appointed; receive Him and be joyful." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 2:34-37).

"God saw their deeds – that they sought Him with their whole heart – so He sent them a 'Teacher of Righteousness' to guide them." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Damascus Rule').

"He (God) revealed to them His Holy Spirit by the hand of His Anointed Ones (i.e. 'Messiahs' / 'Christs')." (Dead

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Sea Scrolls: 'Damascus Rule').

"From ancient times You (God) have appointed the 'Prince of Light' to come for our support; and all the sons of Righteousness are in His hand." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'War Rule').

"He (Levi) is the Messiah of whom God spoke... Draw near to Levi with humbleness of heart in order to receive a blessing from his mouth... It is through him that God (the Spirit) has chosen to reign in the presence of His people. Prostrate yourselves before his heirs... And he shall be among you an Eternal King." (Testament of REUBEN 6:8-12).

"Then the Holy Name shall be glorified; for the Lord God shall be manifest on Earth as man, and save men Himself." (Testament of SIMEON 6:5).

"Through you (Levi) and Judah shall the Lord be seen by men, He Himself saving all mankind." (Testament of LEVI 2:11).

"My (Judah's) successor shall arise as the 'Sun of Righteousness', walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness, and without sin. The Heavens will be opened by him to pour out the Spirit: the blessings of the Holy Father." (Testament of JUDAH 24:1-2).

"And now, my children, do not grieve because I (Zebulon) am dying, nor be depressed because I am leaving you. For I shall rise again (i.e. 'resurrect' or 'reincarnate') in your midst, as a father among his sons." (Testament of ZEBULON 10:1-2).

"Draw near to God (the Spirit) and to His Messenger

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(Angel) ***who intercedes for you, for he is the mediator between God (the Spirit) and man.***" (Testament of DAN 6:2).

"The Most High sends forth His salvation through the ministration of the Unique Prophet." (Testament of BENJAMIN 9:2).

"I am the 'One Who Is'... If you know who I am you will not be uninitiated in My Wisdom." (Sibylline Oracles 1:137-146).

"O blessed servants: those who the Master, at His coming, finds awake; for they have kept watching continually." (Sibylline Oracles 2:179).

"I (God) send witnesses to them... but they will not listen, and they slay My witnesses and persecute those who seek the Truth." (JUBILEES 1:12).

"Open your eyes and lift up your heads if you are able to recognise the Elect One!... From the beginning the Son of Man was hidden, and protected by the power of the Most High, and is revealed only to the elect." (1stENOCH 62:1-7).

"In Your righteousness You (God) visit the sons of men." (Psalms of Solomon 9:4).

"He (Elohim) sends Him (Yahweh) to be seen by them who are His, in order that they may recognise Him who made them." (Odes of Solomon 7:12).

We have now seen many examples from a vast variety of Jewish scriptures that clearly testify to an ever-present 'man-god' – Yahweh. However, there are other passages that give rather confused and sometimes contradictory

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statements on this subject. This is not surprising when one considers that most of these scriptures have passed through the hands of various 'orthodox' (and therefore 'uninitiated') scribes, copyists, interpreters, and translators who, in ancient times, applied rather dubious methods of transmitting the original texts. There is also the probability of simple copying errors, which are inevitable in any such vast hand-written undertaking. These observations also apply to many later Christian scribes, who often thought nothing of blatantly altering religious and historical works to suit *their own* particular beliefs, and to assist in the propagation of *their* preferred form of 'Christianity'. The evidence of this may be found particularly in the intertestamental works of Judaism (i.e. the so-called "Apocrypha" and "Psuedepigrapha"⁴⁸) and the works of the first century Jewish historian Josephus. But, more importantly, such evidence has also been found within the writings that were eventually included in the orthodox canon of the New Testament itself! It is beyond the scope of this study to go into the details of such evidence, but there are many books available on the subject.⁴⁹ Fortunately, there still remains sufficient original and uncorrupted material within the scriptures to enable the important facts to be determined.

If we now look at some passages from the New Testament, and observe the reported words of Jesus and his disciples, it will become quite clear that they too spoke of this continuous line of 'Divine Masters' / 'Christs' / 'Prophets' / 'Saviours'. It should now be clear that the true (gnostic) interpretation of a Master's words is subtly

⁴⁸ These works, which were not admitted into the orthodox Jewish canon of scripture, were highly regarded by many early Christians, and preserved (though in a much distorted and biased fashion) by Christian copyists, translators, and editors.

⁴⁹ For a very readable summary of these facts see: Paul Johnson, *A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY*, Pelican paperback ed., pp.21-28.

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different from that held by traditional orthodox 'believers' (i.e. the uninitiated, or 'agnostics') which have corrupted every religion. Perhaps the most misunderstood verse in the New Testament, and one which has caused the greatest error, is from John's Gospel:

"Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me'."
(JOHN 14:6).

These words have been understood by orthodox Christians to mean that Jesus – the historic Master of the first century – is the one and only way to God. What they have not understood is that there is an essential difference between Jesus the Nazarene (the man – the historic personality who lived during the first century) and the *divine title* 'Christ' or 'Messiah' (the title of 'Divine Kingship' which is held by a continuous succession of men appointed by God!). Many Christians now seem to think that Christ was actually the personal *surname* (family name) of Jesus! While Jesus was living on Earth he was certainly the true Messiah and the only way to God (e.g. "As long as I (Jesus) am in the world, I am the Light of the world." JOHN 9:5), but after his death a living successor would be the way, just as Jesus had succeeded previous Messiahs (e.g. Melchizedek, Moses, etc.) in the eternal line of Saviours. This was clearly understood by Jesus' original Jewish disciples: viz. the "Nazareans" / "Ebionites". Prof. Cullmann states in his book *CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*: "*It is the idea that since all prophets have proclaimed basically the same divine truth, the same prophet was successively incarnated in different men. Thus, the idea arose that actually the same prophet always appeared and that each time he merely took a different form. We find this idea in the Pseudo-Clementine writings and also in the so-called 'Gospel of the Hebrews'; that is, in writings which are actually Jewish-Christian.*" Is it not also reported in the

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canonical New Testament that Jesus confirmed that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah? – see above, p.34 note 38.

The *title* 'Christ', far from being a personal and unique "surname", actually means 'Anointed' or 'Divine King', and applies to all genuine Spiritual Masters appointed (or "anointed") by God. It is actually a Greek translation of the Hebrew *Māshîah* (Messiah); indeed there are similar titles in all languages, e.g. Buddha = 'Enlightened' – a title which would be equally suited to Jesus, as it was to Siddhartha (the Buddha of the sixth century BC). Thus when Jesus said: "*No man comes to the Father except through me*" he was certainly speaking the Eternal Truth, and saying precisely what every other genuine Spiritual Master has said throughout history, i.e. that there is no other way of experiencing God's Spirit (Elohim) but through Him – the current *living* Master, who can personally reveal the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven to sincere seekers. This fact is clearly reported throughout the Old Testament, as we have seen, e.g. "*Since ancient times in Israel, when a man wished to consult God, he would say: 'Let us go to the SEER.'*" (i.e. the 'Prophet', 'man-god', 'Messiah', etc.) (1stSAM.9:9). There are many other examples in the New Testament that, when correctly translated and interpreted, confirm this fact:

"You (orthodox "believers") *have neither heard His (God's) voice at any time, nor seen His form; and His Word has found no home in you: for you do not believe in the one He sends. You study the scriptures diligently, believing that in them you have eternal life; yet, although their testimony points to me* (i.e. the current "living" Master), *you refuse to come to Me to receive that [Spiritual] Life.*" (JOHN 5:38-40).

These words which were reportedly spoken by Jesus and addressed to the orthodox religionists of Israel, precisely

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describe the very attitude of many Christians (and other religions) today – those who value and worship the (dead!) words of scripture, rather than the "living" Word of the current Master. Such people do not consider it possible that the Lord could be physically present on Earth this very day, and therefore do not seek Him. They, like the vast majority of religionists, believe only in an *historic* Master – for the Jews He is Moses, for the Christians he is Jesus.⁵⁰ This situation is typical of most religions, e.g. Muslims accept one further Divine Messenger – Mohammed – as successor to the Prophets of Judaism and Christianity; but similarly deny the possibility of any successors to "their" Prophet!⁵¹

"It is my Fathers will that whoever sees the [Divine] Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal Life." (JOHN 6:40).

⁵⁰ Christians may argue that Jesus was / is different to all previous Jewish Masters / Prophets, as he died for our sins (i.e. a "blood" sacrifice), resurrected, ascended to heaven, and is eternally alive. The claim that Jesus was required to offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins is totally wrong, and arose from the erroneous teachings of St. Paul (see Appendix 7, page 195 ff.) and the pagan beliefs of an unspiritual orthodoxy (see above, page 12, 'Spiritual Law of sacrifice'). Jesus was forgiving sins long before he died (see e.g. MATT.9:2; MARK 2:5; & LUKE 7:48) – his death was not required for any such reason! He apparently said: "*For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the Truth.*" (JOHN 18:37). In fact God was forgiving sins long before Jesus was born (see e.g. EXOD.34:7; 2ndSAM.12:13; PSA.103:3; ISAIAH 43:25; 55:7; JER.33:8; MIC.7:18; ZECH.3:4), so Jesus' death was unnecessary for forgiveness. The further claims – that Jesus rose from death, ascended to heaven, and is eternally alive – are by no means unique. Similar claims were common to many ancient religions (see above p.39 note 46). In addition, Enoch and Elijah were both reported to have ascended to heaven without ever dying (see e.g. 2ndKINGS 2:11; GEN.5:24; & 2ndENOCH 67:2). Even today, at the Passover feast, Jews lay an additional place at their tables in case Elijah should reappear! Similar beliefs about Moses were also widely held, due to the mystery of his burial place.

⁵¹ See e.g. JOHN 5:45 & 9:28-29. These verses are as applicable today as they were in Jesus' day!

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Here it is clearly stated that one must actually see, recognise, and trust in the Divine Master in order to receive eternal Life (i.e. be initiated into the Sacred Mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom). This does not refer to seeing icons or graven images (idols) which abound in all pagan religions – including most forms of Christianity (e.g. crucifixes, paintings or statues of Jesus or various 'saints', etc.). The next passage confirms that every generation has the opportunity of seeing a living Master in person:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My (the living Master's) day; he saw it and was glad. The Jews protested: 'But you are not yet fifty years old! How can you have seen Abraham?' Jesus replied: 'Truly, before Abraham was born, I AM'." (JOHN 8:56-58).

"Anyone who loves Me (the 'living' Master) will be loved by My Father, and I shall love him, and will show Myself to him." (JOHN 14:21).

This verse testifies to the fact that the living Lord will only reveal himself to sincere lovers of Truth – Jesus was indeed seen by many during his life on Earth, but recognised as the Lord by only a few!

"Be observant, or what the Prophets have said will happen to you! Look around, you mockers; wonder, and perish: for I am doing things in your own days, but you will not believe it, even when someone tells you!" (ACTS.13:40-41).

This statement is particularly relevant to those who read this work of interpretation and reject its claims out of hand – they will not believe it possible, even though all their scriptures clearly confirm it.

"Do not trust every spirit, but test them to see if they are from God; for there are many false prophets

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***existing in the world. This is how you may know the Spirit of God: every spirit which acknowledges that the 'Anointed Saviour' (i.e. the Messiah / Yahweh) is [now] come in the flesh is from God; but every spirit which will not admit this is not of God, but is the spirit of antichrist.*" (1st JOHN 4:1-3).**

The 'present' tense⁵² used here (and in much of the New Testament, even though most of it was actually written at least two generations after the death of Jesus) of the 'Saviour' testifies to the unlimited and indefinite time-span of His life – in the flesh – on Earth! Of course this passage does not mean that every claim to be, or to know of, the current Master is genuine; but it does mean that all those who reject the possibility of a Master being currently incarnate are acting against the Truth, and are indeed 'antichrists'!

"I (Jesus) will ask My Father, and He shall give you another to be your advocate, to abide with you for ever." (JOHN 14:16).

***"Take note that I (Jesus) am also sending you Prophets and Wise men and Teachers; some of whom you will murder, and some you will persecute in your churches and hound from town to town."* (MATT.23:34).**

As always, the genuine Prophets / Seers of God are persecuted by the Spiritually blind self-styled "orthodox" religionists and institutionalised religious authorities, who falsely claim (although in complete sincerity of belief!) to

⁵² The Greek grammatical tense system is quite different from English, thus presenting many difficulties in translation, e.g. the 'aorist' is a Greek tense expressing an occurrence that takes place at an undefined time. It particularly expresses timelessness, thus denoting a general truth or an habitual action, e.g. inferring repetition of an occurrence – such as the manifestation or reincarnation of the Divine Spirit! The aorist is best represented in English by use of the present tense.

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be the true and chosen people and representatives of God.

"They shall see the Son of Man coming through the clouds, with Heavenly Power and great Glory. He will send forth his Messengers with the great trumpet sound, and they shall gather His chosen ones together... Truly, I (Jesus) tell you: before this present generation passes away all these things will take place... Keep alert, therefore, and watch, for you do not know what hour your Lord will come... Be ready: for at an hour you do not believe possible (i.e. right now!) the Son of Man comes!" (MATT.24:30-44).

The declarations made in this passage must be considered either as false, or as being already fulfilled! To the orthodox mind, these claims are believed to refer literally to a single "end of the world" Judgement Day, when everybody will face the Lord together at His return to Earth. Thus, to those who do not believe that the Lord has already returned, the claims in this passage must be considered false! However, it is not the passage that is false, but the interpretation given to the 'Final Judgement Day' by the savants of orthodoxy. The truth is that this so-called "end of the world" experience comes to each of us individually – i.e. at that time when each of us finally realises that the Lord is *now* here, *in the flesh*, and when we thus turn to Him in order to be initiated into the Mysteries of the Spirit. This experience brings about our true "rebirth" into the Heavenly Kingdom (i.e. genuine Spiritual Consciousness) and a subsequent end of our 'worldly' oriented life. The reference to 'coming through the clouds' is merely a metaphor for the dawning of Spiritual awareness when the Heavenly Sun arises within our hearts and burns away the illusions (clouds) from within our minds. Thus, for those initiates, the end of the carnal / selfish / materialistic world has arrived, and a new Spiritual World and Life can be experienced. It may now

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be seen that the claims in this passage refer to the continual succession of Masters who incarnate to reveal the Truth and Power of God to every generation of humanity. Thus, these claims have been, and are still being fulfilled, and are nothing but the Truth!

"Jesus said: 'I (= the living incarnate Lord) am with you always, yes, to the end of time'." (MATT.28:20).

"Be like men waiting for their Master's return from a wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as He comes and knocks. Happy are they who the Master finds watching when He comes." (LUKE 12:36-37)

"They shall see the Son of Man coming through the clouds with great power and glory... Truly, I (Jesus) say to you: this generation shall not pass away until all is accomplished... Be careful, or your minds will be filled with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of this (earthly / material) life, and then that day will come upon you unexpectedly like a trap. For that day will come to every single person living in the world! So keep watching all the time, making supplication, that you may pass safely through these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man." (LUKE 21:27-36).

Here again we are clearly told that the Lord will come in person to every generation, and that everyone will have the same opportunity of seeing Him, although, perhaps, few will recognise Him for what He is!

"Why do you search for the living among the dead?" (LUKE 24:5).

These words were directed to those disciples who went to Jesus' grave to anoint his body after the crucifixion. It is inevitable that materialists attach themselves to, and value

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the body more than the Spirit, and thus mourn over physical death. Those who know the Truth, however, know that death is merely an illusion, and that the Spirit never dies. Thus, they do not concern themselves over physical death. Jesus himself confirms this when he said: "*Let the dead (i.e. the Spiritually ignorant) bury the dead.*" (MATT. 8:22). Yes, there are two meanings of 'dead' – the *physical*, and the *Spiritual* (i.e. physically alive, but ignorant of the Mysteries of God). However, the significance of the passage in question is that the line of living Masters / Christs is eternal, so when the body of a Master dies, the Holy Spirit enters another. Thus, the disciples are here being asked why they are seeking the dead body of a now deceased Master, when they should be seeking his *living* successor. This is typical of orthodox religionists, who look to various historic Masters, but never to the current living Lord!

"He (the Lord) comes to the world, but the world, though it owes its existence to Him, does not recognise Him. He comes to His own realm, but His own people do not accept Him. But to all who do receive Him, He gives power to become the children of God: to them that trust in His Name." (JOHN 1:10-12)

"There stands among you – though you do not know it – the one who is to come." (JOHN 1:26-27).

Just as John here proclaims the living Lord to an unbelieving people in the first century, so this study proclaims the very same thing today!

"Jesus said: 'You must trust in Him whom God has sent.'" (JOHN 6:29).

The subject of this verse is most definitely singular – the "man" or the "one" whom God has sent. If we interpret

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this to refer to an *historic* personality whom God has sent, then it would apply equally to Moses or any of the many previous Messengers/Prophets sent by God. The point with all *genuine* laws, statements, commands, or revelations of God is that they are *perpetual*, and therefore apply today as much as ever. This statement must, therefore, refer to the current one sent by God; thus only during those few years of the first century (i.e. approx. 28-31 AD) would this statement have referred to Jesus! In addition, if Jesus had meant this statement to have referred only to Him, He would have said "**Me**" (not Him). This is also confirmed in the following verse:

"As long as I (the living Lord) am in the world, I am the Light of the world." (JOHN 9:5).

As we have now observed, the man-god is always present in the world. The current – not an historic – Master is now in the world, and is therefore the *Light of the world*.

"I (Jesus) will ask the Father, and He will give you another to comfort you, one who will dwell with you for ever. This is the very Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive because it does not see or know Him (i.e. recognise the living Master). **But you** (i.e. genuine Gnostics / Seers) **know Him, for He dwells with you, and** (His Spirit) **is within you. I will not leave you unguided; I am coming back to you. In a short while the world will not see** (i.e. recognise) **Me, but you will see Me. Because I live, you too shall live... He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I shall love him, and shall reveal Myself to him.**" (JOHN 14:16-21).

"Without father, without mother, without human descent; His life has neither beginning nor end; but, as the Son of God, abides a Holy Priest continually." (HEB.7:3).

"Behold! The dwelling place of God is with men, and

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He will dwell among them and they shall be His people, and He will be their God." (REV.21:3).

"God, who inspires the Prophets, sends His Messenger to reveal to His servants what must be done. Behold! I am returning very soon!" (REV.22:6-7).

If we now look at some of the remaining early Gnostic-Christian writings, which were rejected by the orthodox materialists of the various institutionalised Churches, we will also find some very clear descriptions relevant to our present subject:

"Recognise Him who is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will be revealed." (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 5).⁵³

The meaning here is that when anyone turns to the current living Master he / she may then receive real Knowledge (gnosis) of the Divine Mysteries of the Spirit (Elohim) which are hidden from the uninitiated masses. They are concealed for very good reason, for, in the wrong hands, they would be defiled, desecrated, or misused: "*Do not give dogs what is Holy; do not throw pearls before swine.*" (MATT.7:6). These Sacred Mysteries will be dealt with in the next chapter.

⁵³ The *GOSPEL OF THOMAS* was discovered, along with many other previously unknown Christian texts, near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. These texts, some of which may predate some books included in the New Testament, were declared heretical by the orthodox church, and thus buried (c. 380 AD) in a clay jar for preservation. Some contain material of a far more Spiritual nature than the canonical books of the New Testament. Passages from several of these works have been quoted throughout this study. As the language of all the manuscripts is Coptic, their titles have been given the prefix "Coptic" in order to distinguish them from other works of similar name. For the complete texts, see James M. Robinson, *THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY IN ENGLISH*. In 1978 yet another ancient Christian book was discovered in Egypt – The Gospel of Judas, the original of which was written in first or early second century.

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"You ignore the living Prophet currently in your presence, and talk idly of the dead (i.e. historical Prophets)." (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 52).

This verse briefly sums up perhaps the greatest error of religion, as well as the subject of this chapter!

"Jesus said: 'Take heed of the Living One while you are alive, lest you die and seek to see Him and be unable to do so." (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 59).

The common or 'orthodox' belief that, by worshipping an historic Master, one may then meet and unite with Him after death, is here rejected by Jesus. The truth is that the same applies to all who reject the current living Master, as to those who were contemporary with, and rejected, any past Master!

"The Divine Teacher is with you always." (Coptic – Teaching of Silvanus 96:32).

"Jesus said: 'I have seen Abraham and spoken with him, and he has seen Me... I have been among you always, but you have not known Me'." (Gospel of "pseudo"-Matthew 30).

"Jesus said: 'If I do not come in the flesh I could not reveal the Mysteries to you." (Gospel of Bartholomew 1:2).

Indeed, it is impossible to receive the Divine Mysteries from a book, or by devotion to any Master who is no longer "in the flesh."

"Look carefully for His coming, and put your hope in Him... and at His coming, and His future appearances, no one may give any excuse at His judgement, as though he had not heard." (ACTS of Thomas 28).

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This is precisely the case for those who are presently reading this study, for they cannot now say that they were not informed of the facts – of the presence of a current Master – even if they do not believe it!

We have now observed a great deal of evidence from the Judaeo-Christian scriptures clearly supporting the fact of an ever-present man-god. Of course, God does not favour one race of people more than another; therefore, it should not be surprising to learn that scriptures of every great religion speak of the same fact.⁵⁴ Whatever titles, terminologies, and concepts are used to describe the man-god in the various languages and religions (e.g. Avatar, Satguru, Saoshyant, Mahdi, Buddha, etc.) does not change the universal Truth; although dogmatic theologians and misled fundamentalists will never understand or admit it.⁵⁵ Such people (as typical of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees of Jesus' time) will always stubbornly reject these facts for fear of losing their own unique and much valued pride, prestige, respect, power, and authority – in fact the very basis of their lives and/or livelihoods too!

Using hindsight to observe the errors of orthodox Judaism at the time of Jesus gives us the advantage of being able to see a similar picture recurring today, and thus enables us to avoid falling into the same traps. Most Jews were then (and still are) expecting the arrival of a powerful King (Messiah) from God to lead them against their enemies to the 'promised land'. They imagined that he would be a great political and/or military figure who would be clearly recognisable. Jesus, in fact, fulfilled these expectations – but not on the physical / worldly level, which was anticipated by materialists; thus, the majority of Jews did

⁵⁴ See below, Appendix 1, p.157.

⁵⁵ See e.g. ISAIAH 30:9-11 & 56:10-12; JER.4:22 & 7:24-26; HOSEA 4:4-6.

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not recognise him. Today most Christians seem to expect some sort of *Superman* figure to fly through the clouds in the sky and raise up – *physically* – all the faithful, through the air, into a *material* heaven somewhere out in space! The current Master has indeed fulfilled this promise, but, once again, not in a materialistic way. He, in fact, *flies* through the clouds of delusion within the minds of sincere seekers of Truth – the smog of worldly error and Spiritual ignorance which separates everyone from God – and raises them up to the heights of Spiritual consciousness, to the very Kingdom of Heaven *within* (see LUKE 17:20-21); just as He has always done for His 'chosen ones' throughout history.

With this new (or more correctly – original and true) understanding of the existence of a 'Messianic Succession' we may now comprehend many passages from scripture which have always been considered somewhat obscure or mysterious by the uninitiated. For example, after the resurrection (i.e. reincarnation) of the *Christ-Spirit* after the death of Jesus, it is reported: "He (the Lord) *appeared in a different form*" (i.e. body). (MARK 16:12). A more detailed account is given in LUKE 24:13-32, where the newly risen Lord accompanies two of Jesus' previous disciples on a seven-mile walk, teaching them by the examples of Moses and all the Prophets. During this walk, which must have lasted about two hours, these disciples of Jesus did not realise that their companion was, in fact, the new embodiment of the 'resurrected' / 'reincarnated' Christ, viz. The Lord Himself! Only after reaching their destination, and while sharing a meal with this '*stranger*', were their eyes (i.e. their minds) finally opened to recognise who He was – he could thus not have been Jesus! Of course there are also various other confused accounts of a resuscitated body of Jesus contained in the New Testament. These accounts were either composed by authors who were ignorant of the

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facts, or later corrupted by various editors, copyists, or translators who misunderstood or rejected the truth – i.e. the resurrection of the Spirit rather than the body.

Another example of a New Testament passage that may now be correctly comprehended is: "*I* (the Lord) **will write upon them** (i.e. genuine disciples) **the Name of My God... and also My new name.**" (REV.3:12) The 'Name of God' mentioned here refers to the esoteric, ineffable, unchangeable, Mystic Word or Logos of God (which will be explained in the next chapter). However, the 'new' name of the Lord simply refers to a personal (*given*) name of another (new) Master in the Divine succession – just as Melchizedek, Moses, Jesus, etc.

This study should by now have brought several questions to the minds of receptive and mature readers. Christians might well ask the identities of the immediate predecessor and successor of Jesus. From the available evidence, it seems probable that John the Baptist was Jesus' predecessor in the Messianic succession (i.e. Jesus' Master – although this embarrassing fact was later suppressed by the emerging orthodox church). There is no other satisfactory explanation of John's role in the initiation (baptism) stories, in which Jesus first experiences the Spirit of God and the vision of Heaven opening up to him.⁵⁶ The question of who was Jesus' immediate successor is more difficult to answer. Those who know the available details and the problems concerning first century Christian history / mythology will realise that there was certainly no shortage of claimants or

⁵⁶ John was certainly believed to be a Messianic figure by at least some of his disciples – the remnants of which (the Mandaeans = 'Knowers' or 'Gnostics'; whose priests are known as Nasoreans = 'Watchers') still survive in Iraq and Iran. They reject Jesus as a false Messiah, just as many Christians rejected (and still reject) a successor to Jesus. For details see: E.S. Drower, *THE MANDEANS OF IRAQ AND IRAN*; and W. Foerster, *GNOSIS*, vol. 2.

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contenders for that position! Some might think that the Apostle Peter was the rightful and chosen successor; however, most of the available evidence points to James, a brother of Jesus, as actually heading the primary Jerusalem community. But there are also other possible candidates, including Judas Thomas (= Judas the 'twin' (brother of Jesus?); Thomas means: 'twin'). Unfortunately, there was much confusion, strife, and disunity among certain supposed disciples after the crucifixion of Jesus, and so no sure conclusion can now be asserted from the skimpy evidence that is currently available. It is, however, not important for us to know the answer to this purely historic question, for it is only important to know and worship the current living Master.

Before continuing, attention must be drawn to the numerous occasions in which Jesus is reported to have strictly forbidden his disciples to reveal His Messianic identity to 'outsiders' (e.g. MATT.16:20; MARK 8:30; LUKE 9:20-21). This is because many people are not prepared to accept a contemporary living Master, and would tend to respond in an adverse manner (as, no doubt, many will to this study!). In fact, the Master only reveals Himself to those whom He deems worthy and ready, i.e. sincere and mature seekers. For this reason, the identity of the current Master cannot be published.⁵⁷ It is the purpose of this study only to proclaim the existence of such a living Master (as all genuine religious scriptures do, when correctly interpreted) in order that individuals may be aware, and seek for Him themselves.

A word of warning must also be given, for there are indeed many false prophets and religious pretenders etc. (who may be quite sincere and totally ignorant of their errors) who openly advertise their pseudo-spiritual wares – which

⁵⁷ A true Master will always shun idle curiosity and publicity.

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always consist of worldly (i.e. material, emotional, mental, and/or psychic) enticements (see e.g. LUKE 4:5-6) or displays of power (such as healing of the *body* rather than the *Spiritual* healing of the soul and mind (see e.g. ACTS 8:9-11)), or of providing or stimulating various psychological or emotional experiences, or promising some *future* experience of God (e.g. *after* death, as promised by all conventional religions). All such so-called religions or religious experiences are, in fact, false (i.e. unspiritual)! In order to comprehend the error of the first of these types (the "faith-healers") one must understand the difference between the genuine works of God and the works of the "adversary" (Hebrew = *sātān*). Satan is always described in the scriptures as the "prince", "lord", or "god" of *this* (material / carnal) world. He disguises himself as the true God or one of God's ministers /messengers, and then *purchases* disciples with offers of pseudo-spiritual benefits, such as emotional, psychic, or mental experiences; or outright material gifts (see e.g. MATT.4:8-9), such as healing *bodily* (carnal) ailments, or providing *worldly* power, wealth, fame, companionship, security, etc. In contrast, the true God is only concerned with things *Spiritual* – not with *purchasing* followers or tempting people with *material* gifts, mundane experiences, or mere promises. The true Lord reveals the Holy Spirit, *here and now*, to sincere and humble seekers; whether their bodies are sick or crippled makes no difference to their capacity to unite with the Spirit! That is not to say that the Lord cannot or will not heal such sickness, only that He will never make a public declaration or display of such things. Many, if not all, of the accounts of Jesus' public healings and other miraculous feats (as recorded in the New Testament) are frankly spurious.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Jesus reportedly refuses to give any miraculous signs (see e.g. MARK 8:12). On the contrary, such signs are said to be the mark of a 'satan' / 'anti-Christ' (see e.g. MATT.24:24; 2ndTHES.2:9; & REV.13:14). Such stories as Jesus changing water into wine are simply childish

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The second category of so-called 'religious' (i.e. those who merely make *promises* of some *future* union (= atonement⁵⁹) with God, e.g. all supposed "orthodox" religions) are also in error, for the true God always reveals Himself during the earthly lifetime to those who truly seek and are worthy.⁶⁰

From these explanations of the various types of false religion it should now become very clear what Jesus meant when He is reported to have said: "*Many will say to me: 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' Then I shall tell them: 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evil-doers.'*" (MATT.7:22-23) This statement shows that any so-called 'mighty works' done in the personal (exoteric) name – "Jesus" – are nothing but the works of "evil-doers" (i.e. those who reject the current *living* Master – who will always have a different *personal* name!).⁶¹

To conclude this chapter on Yahweh, the Eternal man-god, let us look at a few more passages from various gnostic works of the early years of the Christian era, which

myths – why would he do such a thing? It was of no Spiritual benefit to anyone, and it would be completely at odds for any genuine Master to purchase disciples through such useless miracles. Similar miracles are reported to have been performed by many sorcerers and magicians, see e.g. EXOD.7:11 & 22. In another early (heretical) Christian book it is reported that Jesus brought clay model birds to life, and other such childish stories.

⁵⁹ Atonement (= AT – ONE – MENT) originally meant absolute union with something (Sanskrit: *Yoga*) – in this case God. It is the prime purpose of all humanity to achieve perfect Knowledge (Gnosis) of, and union with God *during* this earthly life (see e.g. JER.3:15; HOS.4:6; WISDOM 15:2-3; MATT.5:48; & JOHN 17:22-23).

⁶⁰ See e.g. 1stCHRON.28:9; 2ndCHRON.15:2-4; JER.29:13-14; & TOBIT 13:6.

⁶¹ "*I will write upon him My (the Lord's) new name.*" (REV.3:12). See also REV.2:17.

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were rejected by the corrupt institutionalised 'Christian' churches:

"It is necessary that a man be taught by a (true) Prophet of God, for they clearly see the Light, and can reveal the Path to Paradise." (Gospel of Barnabas 78).

"All perfect men have seen Him (the Lord); they have declared Him and glorified Him with their own lips." (Gnosis of the Light: Codex Brucianus).

"He it is who the nations look for, to whom the Secrets of God are so clear that, while He is in the world, blessed shall they be who listen to His words." (Gospel of Barnabas 163).

For passages from scriptures of other religions describing the Living Saviour or "man-god" – see Appendix 1, page 157.

The next chapter will explain how to recognise the true living Master by the genuine Spiritual fruits, which only He can, and does, reveal!

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**"I will reveal to you the hidden Treasures,
the Riches kept in secret, that you may
know that I am the Lord." (ISAIAH 45:3).**

These were the words of a living Master several centuries BC, proclaiming His mission to reveal the Sacred Mysteries of the Spirit to His chosen followers – the very means by which we may distinguish a genuine Master from a pretender. Such references to a hidden 'esoteric' Knowledge (Gnosis) are common to all religious scriptures;⁶² but to what are they actually referring? By studying these various references, a very clear picture emerges – a vision never seen by those in the realms of orthodoxy. It is the actual Vision and Knowledge of Elohim / God – the experience of the "Kingdom of Heaven" / "Paradise" / "Nirvana" / etc. – right here and now! Let us proceed by looking at some of these references from various Hebrew and Christian texts:

"Behold the Secrets of Yahweh our God: those things revealed to us (i.e. genuine Israelites = 'Seers of God') and our descendants for ever, that we may observe the Truth." (DEUT.29:29).

"You (Yahweh) have revealed to me (a disciple) the secret and hidden things of Your Wisdom." (PSA.51:6).

⁶² It should be clearly understood that the *orthodox* hierarchies, who have always been the 'keepers,' editors, interpreters, and translators of the ancient sacred texts, have not been initiates of the Mysteries, and have therefore not been suitably qualified for such work. Their translations and interpretations unavoidably tend toward their own (blind) beliefs, and are thus often inadequate or incorrect. This is the reason why there are so many different versions of the Scriptures – none of which are perfect and reveal the profoundness of original meaning (especially toward the esoteric Knowledge / Mysteries, and the ever-present Master / Messiah)! The translations given in this study have thus been amended where necessary.

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"**We** (i.e. initiated disciples of the Lord) **speak of God's hidden Mysteries: the Secret Wisdom.**" (1stCOR.2:7).

"**Now I** (Isaiah) **will show you new things, hidden things unknown to you.**" (ISAIAH 48:6).

"**I** (Yahweh) **will reveal to you** (sincere disciples) **the great Mysteries of which you do not know!**" (JER.33:3).

"**He** (God) **gives Wisdom to the discerning and Knowledge to those with understanding; to them He reveals the deep Mysteries.**" (DAN.2:21-22).

"**The Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven has been revealed to you** (i.e. Jesus' initiated disciples); **but to others it is not revealed.**" (MATT.13:11).

"**To you** (the initiated) **has been entrusted the Mystery of the Kingdom of God; but for those outside** (the uninitiated) **everything becomes a parable.**" (MARK 4:11).

"**In private, to His** (Jesus') **disciples, He revealed everything.**" (MARK 4:34).

"**Jesus said: 'It is only to those who are worthy that I reveal My Mysteries.**" (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 62).

"**Keep these words secret and this book sealed up until the end.**" (DAN.12:4 & 9).

"**I** (Paul) **will tell of Visions and Revelations from the Lord. I know a man... who was taken up to the third heaven... into Paradise, and heard ineffable things which human lips cannot repeat.**" (2ndCOR.12:1-4).

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"I (John⁶³) heard a Voice from Heaven saying: 'Keep the Word of the seven thunders secret, do not write it down'." (REV.10:4).

"Reveal these Secrets only to the wise – to those whose hearts you (Ezra⁶⁴) know are able to understand and keep them safe." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 12:38).

"Bartholomew asked Jesus: 'Lord, is it lawful for me to reveal these Mysteries to everyone?' Jesus replied: 'Bartholomew, my beloved, as many as are faithful and are able to keep them unto themselves, to them you may entrust these things. For there are some that are worthy of them, but there are also others to whom it is not fit to entrust them.'" (Gospel of Bartholomew 4:66-67).

⁶³ The identity of this John – the author of *THE BOOK OF REVELATION* – is unknown. He cannot be positively identified as the author of the *GOSPEL OF JOHN* (who is also of unknown identity). We can only assume that he was a genuine initiate of the Divine Mysteries.

⁶⁴ Ezra is probably a pseudonym used by the author of this work, which was composed during the first century AD. Because the words of ancient scripture had come to be conceived as the final and only revelation from God by orthodox Jews, there was, therefore, no longer room (in their eyes) for further representatives of God appearing on Earth. Any Prophet who prophesied under his own name after the third century BC could not expect a hearing – nay more: according to ZECH.13:1-5, if anyone declared himself to be a prophet his father and mother were commanded to put him to death! Thus, any prophetic author who wished to be heard would have to publish his work under the name of some historic hero. Hence, the book of *DANIEL* – which was written during the second century BC – was only admitted into the orthodox canon through the belief that it was written by the ancient worthy of that name. Orthodox Christianity took a similar view with the New Testament canon, and rejected any works not believed to be by first generation Apostles / disciples of Jesus. However it is highly probable that the New Testament contains NO book directly composed by anyone who had personal contact with the living Jesus (Paul certainly did not!).

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"Some things you (Ezra) may make public, but some things you shall deliver in secret only to the wise." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 14:26).

Concerning the above quotations about a secret Knowledge, note what Jesus is reported to have said: "**Do not give dogs what is Holy; do not throw pearls before swine.**" (MATT.7:6). In other words, to reveal the Mysteries of God indiscriminately to the materialistic masses would be complete sacrilege.

"God's secret Mystery, in which all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are hidden." (COL.2:2).

"They (the uninitiated) do not know the hidden things of God." (WISDOM 2:22).

"Wisdom is an initiate of the Mysteries of God's Knowledge." (WISDOM 8:4).

"God's choice did not fall on these (e.g. materialists); He did not reveal the Way of Knowledge to them!" (BARUCH 3:27).

"The place (i.e. of the hidden 'Ark' of Sacred Power) **shall be unknown until God gathers His people together again and shows them His mercy. Then Yahweh will reveal these things and thus His Glory will be seen.**" (2ndMACCABEES 2:7-8).

"He (the Divine Master) **shall conceal the teaching of Truth from the men of falsehood, but shall impart true Knowledge and Righteous judgement to those who have chosen the Way... and instruct them in the Mysteries of His wonderful Truth."** (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Community Rule').

"My (an initiated disciple of the Lord) **eyes have gazed**

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on that which is Eternal, on Wisdom concealed from [carnal] men, on Knowledge and wise design hidden from the sons of men; on a fountain of Righteousness and on a storehouse of Power, on a Spring of Glory hidden from the assembly of flesh." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Community Rule').

"These things I (an initiate) know by the Wisdom which comes from Thee (God), for Thou hast unstopped my ears to Thy wonderful Mysteries." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'The Hymns').

"For You (the Lord) have given me (an initiate) Knowledge through Your marvellous Mysteries, and have shown Yourself mighty within me." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'The Hymns').

"I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast Enlightened me through Thy Truth. In Thy marvellous Mysteries... Thou hast granted me Knowledge." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'The Hymns').

"His disciples said to Him (Jesus): 'Master, reveal to us the Mystery of the Light of Thy Father, since we heard You say: 'There is still a Fire-baptism⁶⁵ – the baptism of the Holy Spirit of Light – the Spiritual Anointing which leads the soul into the Treasury of Light'. Tell us, therefore, the Mystery, so that we may inherit the Kingdom of Your Father'." (Pistis Sophia).

"I (Jesus) will give unto them (sincere disciples) the Mystery of the Father in secret... [thus] they became perfect, for they knew God and the Truth, and they understood the Mystery which works within man." (Gnosis of the Light – Codex Brucianus).

⁶⁵ See MATT.3:11.

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From these passages, it should be clear that there is a great and all-important Mystery – a hidden and Sacred Treasure: the very Knowledge and experience of God Himself – which may be revealed only by a 'living' Master to His chosen disciples. Of course, those blind teachers of orthodoxy have, and always will deny that there exists anything more than what they possess and teach.⁶⁶ However, there was at least one early 'semi'-orthodox "father" of the Christian Church – Clement of Alexandria⁶⁷ – who spoke of a *secret* Gnosis. In his second century work, *Stromateis*, the principal object was to point out the distinction between those Christians who were 'perfected' in Divine "Knowledge" (Gnosis), and the great mass of "believers". He says that he is not at liberty to disclose fully and openly wherein this Gnosis consists, as it is of too pure and Spiritual a nature to be comprehended by the masses. Christ, he said, communicated important truths to the apostles, which were neither intended for the ear, nor adapted to the comprehension of the carnal masses, and which had come down to his (Clement's) own time (2nd Century AD) through oral tradition.

In 1958 professor Morton Smith of Columbia University discovered, in an ancient Christian monastery near Jerusalem, a copy of a previously unknown letter written by Clement to someone named Theodore, and containing a fragment of a "Secret" Gospel of Mark.⁶⁸ From the contents of the letter it seems that Clement had previously received a communication from Theodore complaining of

⁶⁶ See e.g. HOSEA 4:6; JER.2:8; MAL.2:7-9; MATT.23:13; & LUKE 11:52.

⁶⁷ Clement (c. 140 – c. 215 AD) was officially a Catholic "Saint" until the seventeenth century, when his orthodoxy was finally questioned due to his gnostic / esoteric tendencies. He was thus stripped of his long-standing sainthood!

⁶⁸ For the full account of this discovery see: M. Smith, *THE SECRET GOSPEL OF MARK*.

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a sect of pseudo-gnostics called Carpocratians (named after their leader: Carpocrates). Apparently, these Carpocratians had obtained a copy of this 'Secret Gospel' and were misinterpreting it according to their own false beliefs. In Clement's reply to Theodore, he states:

"[As for] Mark, then, during Peter's stay in Rome he wrote [an account of] the Lord's doings, not, however, declaring all [of them], nor yet hinting of the secret [ones], but selecting those he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed. But when Peter died as a martyr, Mark came over to Alexandria, bringing both his own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to whatever makes for progress towards Knowledge [gnosis]. [Thus] he composed a more Spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected. Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that Truth hidden by seven [veils]. Thus, in sum, he prearranged matters, neither grudgingly nor incautiously, in my opinion, and, dying, he left his composition to the church in Alexandria, where it even yet is most carefully guarded, being read only to those who are being initiated into the great Mysteries."

But since the foul demons are always devising destruction for the race of men, Carpocrates, instructed by them and using deceitful arts, so enslaved a certain presbyter of the church in Alexandria that he got from him a copy of the Secret Gospel, which he both interpreted according to his blasphemous and carnal doctrine and, moreover, polluted, mixing with the spotless and holy words utterly shameless lies. From this mixture is drawn off the teaching of the Carpocratians."

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A little later in his letter, Clement actually quotes a short, but important passage from this Secret Gospel itself:

"And they came into Bethany, and a certain woman whose brother had died, was there. And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and said to him: 'Son of David, have mercy on me'. But the disciples rebuked her. And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb. And going near, Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. And straightway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand. But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him. And going out of the tomb they came into the house of the youth, for he was rich. And after six days Jesus told him what to do, and in the evening the youth came to him, wearing a linen cloth over [his] naked [body].⁶⁹ And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the Mystery of the Kingdom of God." (Secret Gospel of MARK).

Prof. Smith, talking of his discovery on a TV documentary, concluded: "A few years after Jesus' death we hear of disciples baptising converts in His name, but about baptism administered by Jesus himself the Gospels say practically nothing. Why? There is a mystery here! Can it be that Jesus' baptism was the Mystery? Perhaps the Mystery of the Kingdom of God! In that secret nocturnal initiation, Jesus may have given the initiates a hypnotic experience that would make them share His ascent to the Kingdom of Heaven... He was offering his disciples' access to the Kingdom of Heaven, not in the far future, but right now!"

⁶⁹ The reason for this attire of a covering or veil of linen cloth (cf. MARK 14:51-52) is very significant, and will be explained later. See below, p.97, note 83.

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The fact is that every genuine Master actually reveals – here and now (i.e. during their lifetime) – the experience of the Spiritual Kingdom of God to His disciples. This is, indeed, the only certain way of discerning a genuine Master from a pretender. But what *is* this mysterious experience of the so-called "Kingdom of God"? What, exactly, does it comprise? Again, the sacred scriptures contain the answer. We find that the experience has certain characteristics which may be placed under four headings: (1.) the Holy / Mystic / Esoteric / '*unspeakable*' "**NAME**" or "**WORD**", (2.) "**LIGHT**", (3.) "**SOUND**", and (4.) "**FOOD**" or "**DRINK**" of God.⁷⁰ If we take each of these attributes in turn, and refer to the corresponding descriptions contained in the Judaeo-Christian scriptures, some very interesting and revealing facts are revealed.

Firstly, then, the Divine "Name" (or "Word"⁷¹) of God. A

⁷⁰ Is it merely a coincidence that there are said to be **FOUR** "Archangels" (chief 'messengers' / 'revealers' of God)? E.g. Shemuel = **Name** of God, Uriel = **Light** of God, Gabriel = **Sound** (thunder, trumpet) of God, and Pethuel / Raphael = [Spiritual/Healing] **Food** of God.

⁷¹ "*His (God's) Name is called the Word of God.*" (REV.19:13). "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was (is) God.*" (JOHN 1:1). The scriptures themselves have become commonly known as the '**Word** of God,' but this is very misleading. There are two Greek terms used in the New Testament which are both translated into English as 'word,' *rhema* (mundane usage), and *Logos* (Mystical – with no exact English equivalent). *Logos* has a long tradition in Greek philosophy, in which it has a variety of complex meanings. In ancient times, words were believed to have mystical powers; thus, the use of *logos* has great theological significance. The "Word" is the active, powerful, *presence* of God! The Word (*Logos*) that Jesus *revealed* and used was the Word of transforming power. By His Word the sick were made whole (MATT.8:8; LUKE 7:7) and demons driven out (MATT.8:16). It was also the 'Word' of Salvation that was able to bring Life to the (Spiritually) dead and transform the Spiritually decayed (JOHN 5:24; 17:17; cf. JAMES 1:18; 1 PET.1:23). The Word of God is a Living and active Power, a timeless moment at which, in our own time and space, we can meet the *living* God! It has nothing to do with the narrative words of scripture!

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good definition of a 'name' is: "*that by which someone or something is KNOWN.*" It was possibly for this reason that the term *name* began to be used of the Mystic / ineffable *Essence* of God, i.e. *that (mystery) by which God is KNOWN.* This Holy Name is not a *speakable* or *inscribable* word or title⁷² – not like the mere *labels*: "Yahweh", "Elohim", "Jesus", "God", "Allah", etc., as the savants of orthodoxy might have us believe – but that which is the very *Essence, Nucleus, and Power* of GOD: HIS very BEING! Traditional orthodox Judaism has always believed that the title: "Yahweh" is itself the Mystic Name of God, and thus they assumed that this was the Name or Word that may not (*cannot!*) be pronounced.⁷³ They misunderstood that it was not by merely refusing to speak the Divine Name that made it ineffable, but that it was (and is) ineffable *by nature*, i.e. the Sacred Name is simply not a *speakable* word – but the very *Essence* of God: *the Life Force itself!*⁷⁴ This is the True, Great, and Powerful Name that the scriptures refer to – NOT to a personal name such as Jesus! It should also be clearly understood that there is another term that came to be used synonymously with "Name" to refer to this Mystic Essence of God, i.e. the Holy "WORD" or "LOGOS".⁷⁵ Let

⁷² "The 'INCOMMUNICABLE' Name." (WISDOM 14:21). "Why do you ask My Name? – since it is beyond understanding." (JUDGES 13:18).

⁷³ The Hebrew title: "Yahweh" (derived from YHWH) is not really a word, but is known as the "Tetragrammaton," the four consonants standing for the ancient Hebrew name for God, commonly referred to as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." This term was considered too sacred to be pronounced, and so was always substituted by the term "Adonai" (Hebrew = "my Lord") when reading the scriptures.

⁷⁴ "He (the Father) revealed how the Living Word is not made up of vowels or consonants, that one might read it and think of something foolish, but Spiritual letters of Truth which they alone invoke who know them... The Name is not formed of letters, nor does His Name consist of appellations, but it is invisible." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, pp.23:2-10 & 39:3-6).

⁷⁵ Just as the term "Name" was used to describe the Mystic Essence of God, because a name implies: "that by which something/someone is known," so, too, was the Greek term for "Divine Word" / "Oracle" (viz.

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us now look at a few passages from ancient scripture concerning this most sacred Name or Word of God:

"I (God) will transmit My whole Splendour before you (Moses) and reveal to you the Sacred Name of the Lord." (EXOD.33:19).

"This glorious and awesome Name of the Lord God." (DEUT.28:58).

"It (the Word) is not in the sky, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend to the sky to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' No, the Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it." (DEUT.30:12-14).

"The 'Angel of the Lord' (i.e. Yahweh Himself) said to him (Manoah): 'Why do you ask My Name? – for it is Awesome (i.e. beyond understanding / a Sacred Mystery)'." (JUDGES 13:18).

"Blessed be Thy (Yahweh's) glorious Name that surpasses all blessing and praise." (NEH.9:5).

"Those who know Your (God's) [Holy] Name will trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken them that seek You." (PSA.9:10).

"Logos" / "Logion" = "the teaching / revelation of [a] God", i.e. that by which the 'Mystic Essence' is known) also frequently used in scripture. That these terms ('Name' and 'Word' of God) are synonymous is also confirmed in the text of the New Testament: *"His (the Lord's) Name is called: the Word of God."* (REV.19:13). Unfortunately the English translation of Logos as 'word' does not transmit adequately the original Mystical / Spiritual meaning of the Greek, and has lead to many people falsely believing that the written texts (i.e. religious scriptures) themselves are the *Word* of God.

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"By the Word of Yahweh were the Heavens made."
(PSA.33:6).

"Save me, O God, by the Power of Thy Name."
(PSA.54:1).

"I (Yahweh) lift him (the initiated disciple) **on high, for he knows My Name.**" (PSA.91:14).

"Let them laud Your (Yahweh's) Great and tremendous Name, for it is Holy." (PSA.99:3).

"His (Yahweh's) Name is Holy and awe-inspiring."
(PSA.111:9).

"The Name of the Lord is a tower of strength."
(PROV.18:10).

"Thus speaks the Most High, who abides forever, and whose Name is Holy." (ISAIAH 57:15).

"Thy (Yahweh's) Name has great power." (JER.10:6).

"I (Yahweh) will make known My Holy Name in the midst of My people Israel." (EZEK.39:7).

"All who recite the Lord's Name shall be saved."
(JOEL 2:32).

"Some (i.e. ignorant people) **assign to stocks and stones** (i.e. idols) **the 'incommunicable' Name!"**
(WISDOM 14:21).

"It was neither herb nor poultice that cured them (i.e. the Israelites who had been bitten by snakes, etc.), **but Your all-healing Word, O Lord."** (WISDOM 16:12).

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"Down from Heaven, from the Royal Throne, leapt Your all-powerful Word." (WISDOM 18:15).

"(Those who receive the Crown of Glory are) *they who have laid aside their carnal nature and put on Immortality: those who know the Name of God.*" (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 2:45).

"They shall be saved because they took refuge in His Holy Name." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Liturgical Fragments').

"Your (the Lord's) Name is Holy and blessed and glorious throughout all ages." (1stENOCH 9:4).

"The Lord called me with His own mouth and said: 'Come near, Enoch, to My Holy Word'." (1stENOCH 14:24).

"The Son of Man (i.e. Yahweh) was named by the Name in the presence of the Lord of Spirits (i.e. Elohim)." (1stENOCH 48:2).

"He (Beqa) asked Michael to reveal the secret Name... which reveals all the hidden things to the children of men, for it is powerful and strong." (1stENOCH 69:14-15).

"There came to them a great joy... because the Name of that Son of Man was revealed to them." (1stENOCH 69:26-27).

"I (the Lord) will bring forth in shining Light those who Love My Holy Name." (1stENOCH 108:12).

"While Thy Name dwells within us, we shall find mercy." (Psalms of Solomon 7:5).

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"The Father of Knowledge is the Word of Knowledge."
(Odes of Solomon 7:7).

"They (initiated disciples of the Lord) were penetrated by the Word, and they knew Him who made them... For the dwelling-place of the Word is man, and its Truth is Love." (Odes of Solomon 12:10-12).

"And Light dawned from the Word that was before time in Him. The Messiah in Truth is One; and He was known before the foundation of the world, that He might save souls for ever by the Truth of His Name." (Odes of Solomon 41:14-15).

"I (the Lord) sealed My Name upon their heads."⁷⁶
(Odes of Solomon 42:20).

"I (Isaiah) praised Him, who is not named, the Only-begotten who dwells in the Heavens, whose Name is

⁷⁶ The head is the abode of the Spirit – the very 'Temple' of God "not built by [human] hands!" This is the reason for many references to genuine Holy men "laying hands on" the heads of disciples during initiation. The sides of the head, at eye level, are actually called the "temples," and covered by the "crown." There are many references to this in the scriptures – see e.g. GEN.49:26; EXOD.28:38; DEUT.33:16; EZEK.9:4; REV.7:3; 9:4; 14:1; & 22:4. Just behind the centre of the forehead, between the two outer eyes, and at the front centre of the brain, lies the only non-dual part of the brain: called the pineal gland or 'eye' – the Mystic "single eye" – also called the "third eye" or the "eye of Shiva". The New Testament contains an interesting statement: "*If thy eye be 'single', thy whole body will be filled with Light.*" (MATT.6:22); see also LUKE 11:34; EXOD.13:9ff; DEUT.6:8; & 11:18. Rene Descartes (17th Century French scientist and philosopher) believed the pineal gland to be the "seat of the soul". Even today, science has been unable to define the exact purpose of this organ. It has, however, been discovered that it is somehow linked with surrounding 'light' levels. Note, also, the similarity between the words 'pineal' and the Hebrew term 'peniel' (= "face of God") – the name given by Jacob to the place where he actually saw God (the Spirit) "face to face" (GEN.32:30). After this experience, Jacob was re-named 'Israel', i.e. 'he who sees God'!

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not known to carnal men." (Ascension of Isaiah 7:37).

"This is your God, the Anointed Lord, who will be called 'Jesus' in the world, but His true Name you cannot hear till you have risen from your carnal life." (Ascension of Isaiah 9:5).

"I (Joseph) called upon my God by the inextinguishable Name." (Prayer of Joseph [Fragment A] v. 9).

"All the created things which You established, Master, through the 'One' Word." (Testament of Abraham 9:6).

"The Sacred Name engraved with a pen of flame on the Throne of Glory." (3rd ENOCH 39:1).

"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." (MATT.6:9).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was (is) with God, and the Word was (is) God!" (JOHN 1:1).

"I (Jesus) have revealed Thy (God's) Name to those You have given Me out of the world... Holy Father, protect by the power of Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be One, as We are One. While I was with them, I kept those You had given Me true to Thy Name... I have revealed Thy Name to them." (JOHN 17:6-26).

"All who invoke the (true) Name of the Lord shall be saved." (ACTS.2:21).

"There is no other name under heaven revealed to men, which can bring Salvation." (ACTS.4:12).

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"Submit to the engrafted Word, which can save your souls." (JAMES 1:21).

"I (the living Lord) **will write⁷⁷ upon them** (sincere disciples) **the Name of My God.**" (REV.3:12).

"They (those who attain the Kingdom of Heaven) **all had His** (the Lord's) **Name, and the Name of His Father, written on their foreheads.**" (REV.14:1).

"He (the Lord) **possessed a Name known only to Himself... and His Name is called: 'The Word of God'.**" (REV.19:12-13).

"They (initiated disciples of the living Lord) **shall see Him (God) face to face, and His Name will be born on their foreheads.**" (REV.22:4).

"One single name is not uttered in the world, the Name which the Father gave to the Son, the Name above all things: the Name of the Father. For the Son would not become Father unless He wears the Name of the Father. Those who have this Name know it, but they do not speak it. But those who do not have it do not know it." (Coptic – Gospel of Philip, p.54:5-13).

"The Name exalted above every name. They (genuine 'Apostles' / 'Messengers' of God) **will reveal that Name to those who are worthy of it.**" (Coptic – Apocryphon of John, p.7:28-30).

"The Word, which was the first to appear, revealed to them the Pure Mind which speaks the One Word in silent grace." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.37:7-12).

⁷⁷ This is merely a symbolic way of describing the Mystic initiation into the ineffable Divine Name, and has nothing to do, literally, with writing.

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"The Name is invisible because it alone is the mystery of the invisible which comes to ears that are completely filled with it. For, indeed, the Father's Name is not spoken, but it is revealed through a Son. In this way, then, the Name is a great thing. Who, therefore, will be able to recite His Name, the great Name, except Him alone to whom the Name belongs, and the sons of the Name in whom rests the Name of the Father, and who in turn themselves rest in His Name." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.38:16-32).

"Come, thou Holy Name of the Christ (i.e. the Anointed Master) that is above every name." (ACTS of Thomas 27).

"Thomas said: 'You (Mysdaeus) cannot hear His true Name at this time, but the name that was given Him (i.e. the living Lord of that period) is Jesus the Christ." (ACTS of Thomas 163).

"All who discover the Ineffable Word, truly, I (Jesus) say to you: All who know that Word will understand the gnosis of all these words I have spoken to you." (Pistis Sophia).

"There is one Name which is more excellent than them all, the Name in which are all names and all lights and all powers. Whoever knows that Name... no darkness, no worldly power can hold down the soul which knows that Name." (Pistis Sophia).

To sum up these passages – which were written by a wide selection of both Jewish and Christian Mystics / Gnostics over a period of about one thousand years – we are told that personal Knowledge (Gnosis) of the one Holy ineffable 'Word' / 'Name' of God is absolutely essential for salvation. This Mystic Name or Word clearly cannot be

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communicated in writing,⁷⁸ but may be revealed only by a genuine *living* Master through Mystic initiation.

The Holy Name or Word is itself the creative power and Life force of the Universe.⁷⁹ This omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient *primordial vibration* is the very *Essence* of God – Pure Spiritual energy. It is the sustainer of all life, and operates through its own subtle vibration resonating in the breath of every living being.⁸⁰ In most ancient languages one single term is used to express both "breath" and "spirit" (e.g. Hebrew = *rûach*; Greek = *pneuma*; Latin = *spiritus*; Sanskrit = *prana*) – the ancients must surely have known the significance – the HOLY BREATH or SPIRIT. Jesus, like all other genuine Masters, would have actually revealed this Mystic Word / Name / Vibration (i.e. the "Holy Breath" = *Spirit*) to His close (dedicated) disciples. Only a living Master can reveal this greatest of all Mysteries to humanity. Scientists are beginning to understand these facts – e.g. that everything in the universe is vibrating, every atom and molecule – yet they will never discover the Primordial and Pure (ethereal) Vibration of God (the Spirit) unless they turn with humility, "*like little children*", to the living Lord; for it is not something that can be observed or measured with scientific instruments. It should now be quite clear that when the original initiated apostles of Jesus were told by

⁷⁸ The scriptures are not themselves the "Word" of God, but merely words describing the ONE *ineffable WORD* (amongst a collection of much that is not, unfortunately, Spiritually inspired!). See above, p.79, note 71; and p.80, notes 74 & 75.

⁷⁹ The word "Universe" may be derived from *uni* = "one", and *verse* = "harmonic cycle / vibration", viz. The Logos, Primordial Vibration, or creative Power of God.

⁸⁰ See e.g. JOHN 20:22; compare GEN.2:7, and also: "*He (God) moves upon the fringes of the breath. He makes the breath His messenger.*" (PSA.104:3-4). Most translations incorrectly give wind instead of breath (the primary meaning of the Hebrew *rûach*), as though God would use an element of weather as His messenger! "*But it is the Spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.*" (JOB 32:8).

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Him to *baptise disciples into the Name of the Father*, Jesus was telling them to actually reveal – through Mystic initiation – this most secret and ineffable Name / Word / Vibration which resides in our breath. He was certainly not telling them merely to *repeat* His words like a parrot, as the orthodox churches do!

N.B. For a selection of passages referring to this 'Holy Name' of God from scriptures of other religions, see Appendix 2, page 163.

The next heading in our list of Spiritual manifestations is "LIGHT". The Light of God is also referred to symbolically as "Fire", "Lightning", etc; but is, in reality, an inward Mystic VISIONARY experience (viz. The "Beatific Vision") of the Supreme Spirit (i.e. Elohim / God). This Light may actually be SEEN (experienced) by initiated disciples of the Lord. Once again, we will allow some ancient scriptures to speak for themselves:

"The Messenger of Yahweh appeared to him (Moses) as a Flame of Fire." (EXOD.3:2).

"Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because God had descended on it in the form of Fire." (EXOD.19:18).

"The Vision of Yahweh's Glory was like burning Fire." (EXOD.24:17).

"The Lord your God is a consuming Fire⁸¹... On Earth He let you (the Israelites) see His Great Fire, and out of the Fire you heard His Word." (DEUT.4:24 & 36).

⁸¹ By "consuming Fire" is meant that the Light / Fire of God destroys (burns up or eradicates) all the errors / evils of Spiritual ignorance (cf. JER 23:29). It has nothing to do with any punishment by fire (e.g. "burning in hell"). Such notions are the inventions of ignorant religionists.

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"Behold! A 'Chariot of Fire' appeared, and horses of Fire... and Elijah was taken up by the power of the Spirit into Heaven." (2ndKINGS 2:11).

"He (God) made a dark veil to hide His Secret abode: a thick covering of cloud; in the Vision of His Brightness the cloud passes away, revealing His rain of Flaming embers." (PSA.18:11-12).

"The Voice of the Lord brings forth Flames of Fire." (PSA.29:7).

"In Thy (God's) Light we see the Light." (PSA.36:9).

"Send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth to be my guide." (PSA.43:3).

"He (God) makes the breath His messenger, and flames of fire his ministers." (PSA.104:4).

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light." (ISAIAH 9:2).

"The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting Light, and your God will be your glory. Your (Spiritual) Sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting Light, and your days of sorrow will end." (ISAIAH 60:19-20).

"Behold! The Lord comes with Fire!" (ISAIAH 66:15).

"Yahweh placed His hand on me (Ezekiel); then I looked and saw a great Spirit from the north: a great cloud surrounded by Light and flashing Fire... I saw what looked like Fire – a radiant disc of Light... It was

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the Vision of the Glory of Yahweh." (EZEK.1:3-28).

This is a clear description of Mystic Initiation and the resulting "Vision" (i.e. the 'Beatific Vision) which is revealed and experienced during genuine Spiritual Initiation – the "Fire" Baptism mentioned in MATT.3:11. (Note, also, "the placing on" of Yahweh's hand).

"His (God's) throne is blazing Flame, encircled by discs of Fire." (DAN.7:9).

"His (the Lord's) brightness is the Light, rays flash from His hand, this is the hidden power of God." (HAB.3:4).

"For all who fear My Name, the Sun of Righteousness shall shine with healing in its rays." (MAL. 4:2).

"Wisdom is the brightness of Eternal Light... In each generation it enters Holy souls and makes them friends and Prophets of God." (WISDOM 7:26-27).

"For Thy Holy ones there shines a great Light... You give Your people a pillar of blazing Fire to guide them on their secret journey, an [inner] Sun which will not scorch them on their glorious migration." (WISDOM 18:1 & 3).

"Bring the [Spiritually] blind to the Vision of My (God's) Brightness." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 2:21).

"Be ready to receive the rewards of My (God's) Kingdom: the perpetual Light which will shine in you for ever and ever." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 2:35).

"Those born of Truth spring from the fountain of Light... All the children of Righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of Light."

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(Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Community Rule' Col. III).

"I seek Thee (God), and as sure as the dawn Thou appearest as perfect Light to me... Thou hast revealed Thyself to me in Thy power as perfect Light." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Hymn' 7).

"He (the Lord) will baptise you with the Holy Spirit of Fire." (MATT.3:11).

"If your eye be single, your whole body will be filled with Light." (MATT.6:22-23).

"He (John the Baptist) came to bear witness to the Light." (JOHN 1:7).

"Anyone who follows Me (the living Lord) will not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." (JOHN 8:12).

"Then they (the initiated disciples) saw what looked like tongues of Flame which spread out and rested on each of them. Thus they were filled with the Holy Spirit." (ACTS.2:3).

"Suddenly a Light from Heaven shone all around him (Paul)." (ACTS.9:3).

"His (the Lord's) Messengers are the Spirits; His servants are Flames of Fire." (HEB.1:7).

"Those who have been Enlightened, who have tasted the Heavenly Gift." (HEB.6:4).

"Our God is a consuming Fire." (HEB.12:29).

"God who has called you (initiated disciples) out of

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darkness into His marvellous Light." (1stPET.2:9).

"God is Light." (1stJOHN 1:5).

"From the Throne (of God) came flashes of Lightning and peals of Thunder, and there were seven lamps of Fire burning before the Throne, which were the seven Spirits of God." (REV.4:5).

"There is no night there (in the Heavenly Kingdom); no need of lamps or sunlight, for the Lord God is their Light." (REV.22:5).

"The Great Glory (the Spirit of God) sits on the Throne, and His raiment shines more brightly than the sun, and is whiter than snow." (1stENOCH 14:20).

"He (the Lord) reveals His Light to the righteous and elect who dwell upon the Earth." (1stENOCH 38:2).

"The Light of the Lord's Spirit is seen by the holy, righteous, and elect." (1stENOCH 38:4).

"The chosen ones shall be in the Light of Eternal Life... For they shall seek the Light and find Righteousness with the Lord of Spirits." (1stENOCH 58:3-4).

"The Lord has directed my (an initiate's) mouth by His Word, and has opened my heart by His Light." (Odes of Solomon 10:1).

"The Lord renewed me with His garment and possessed me by His Light... The Lord is like the sun shining on the face of the land. He Enlightened my eyes." (Odes of Solomon 11:11-14).

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"He (the Lord) is my Sun, and His rays have lifted me up; His Light has dispelled all darkness from my face." (Odes of Solomon 15:2).

"I was lifted up in the Light and passed before His (God's) face." (Odes of Solomon 21:6).

"I (an initiate) ascended to the Light of Truth as if on a chariot, the Truth guided me and led me... It became to me a haven of Salvation, and laid me in the arms of Eternal Life." (Odes of Solomon 38:1-3).

"And Light dawned from the Word which was before time in Him (the Lord)." (Odes of Solomon 41:14).

"He (the Lord) raised me (Isaiah) up into the seventh Heaven, and I saw there a wonderful Light." (Ascension of Isaiah 9:6).

"A great and indescribable Light appeared, and Aseneth saw it and bowed her face in the ashes." (Joseph & Aseneth 14:2-3).

"He (the Lord) is the immeasurable Light which is Pure, Holy, and Perfect." (Coptic – Apocryphon of John, p.3:17-18).

"There came in me (Peter) fear and joy, for I saw a new Light, greater than the light of day." (Coptic – Apocalypse of Peter, p.72:21-25).

"There is Light within a man of Light, and it lights up the whole world. If it does not shine, then one is in darkness!" (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 24).

"The Mysteries of this [Spiritual] marriage (i.e. union with God) are consummated in the day and the Light.

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Neither that day nor its Light ever sets. If anyone becomes a son of that [Spiritual] bridal chamber, he will receive the Light." (Coptic – Gospel of Philip, p.86:1-5).

"When I (Peter), with the sons of Zebedee, saw the brightness of His (the Lord's) Light, I fell as if dead and shut my eyes, and heard such a Voice from Him that I am not able to describe, and thought myself to be blinded by His Brightness." (ACTS of Peter 20).

"You (an initiate) shall behold the Light, more excellent than daylight, which shines more brightly than the sun, and is more perfect than perfection. Thus the son shall become perfect through the Father Who is Light." (Epistle of the Apostles 19).

"Cease not to seek day and night, and remit not yourselves until you find the Mystery of the Light-Kingdom, which will purify you and make you into refined Light, and lead you into the Kingdom of Light." (Pistis Sophia).

"Even a righteous man who has committed no sin at all cannot enter the Light-Kingdom if the Seal of the Mysteries is not revealed to him." (Pistis Sophia).

"There is a Fire-baptism – the baptism of the Holy Spirit of Light – the Spiritual anointing, which leads the soul into the Treasury of Light." (Pistis Sophia).

"O alone-begotten of Light, I praise Thee; O Light unengendered, I praise Thee... O Gnosis of Light surpassing all knowledge, I praise Thee... O thou pure Light, surpassing all purity, I praise Thee... O thou only all-perfect Light, I praise Thee." (Gnosis of the Light: Codex Brucianus).

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What can one add to these ancient testimonies to the Mystic Light of God? It should only be repeated and emphasised that this Light is a very real experience, which may actually be seen by all initiated disciples of the genuine contemporary Master during their lifetime on Earth! Enlightenment is not merely a metaphorical term used of *intellectual* comprehension, as is implied by so many adherents of orthodoxy. The result of seeing this Mystic Light of God (the Beatific Vision) may be described by taking the example of an undeveloped photographic film. If one were to take such a reel of film, which had been filled with various images, and expose it to a physical light source, then all the images would be 'burned' off. If we compare our minds with this photographic film, they, too, are filled (from birth) with a huge variety of concepts and images, i.e. a multitude of *indoctrinated* notions, traditions, and beliefs. Thus, by exposing one's mind to the Divine Light of Truth, all false concepts, impurities, selfish desires, etc (simply all that is 'evil') is burned away – the mind is genuinely cleansed of all worldly rubbish – thus returning one to the original and perfect condition of unity with Truth / God (i.e. when humankind was "*made in the image of God.*" (GEN.1:27)).

For a selection of passages from scriptures of other religions describing this same Mystic Light, see Appendix 3, page 169.

Now we will move on to the third heading in our list of esoteric Spiritual characteristics / manifestations of God, i.e. the Mystic "SOUND". This *internal* audible experience of the Spirit is variously described as the "Voice of God", or likened to the sounds of "thunder", "rushing waters", "wind", "choirs of angels", "trumpets" or other musical instruments. This experience is heard deep within the silence of our soul. Once again, we will let the

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ancient scriptures tell of the experience:

"There came thundering and lightning, and a cloud upon the mountain of God, and a great Voice like trumpets blasting, so that all the people in the camp trembled." (EXOD.19:16).

"The Sound, like trumpets, grew louder; when Moses spoke, God answered him with a Voice like thunder." (EXOD. 19:19).

"The Holy Sound shall be heard when one enters the [Spiritual] Sanctuary of the Lord, so that [Spiritual] death may be overcome even when returning to the world." (EXOD.28:35).

"A Sacred Assembly proclaimed with the Holy trumpet call." (LEV.23:24).

"From Heaven He (God) let you (initiates) hear His Voice for your instruction." (DEUT.4:36).

"Yahweh our God has shown us (the Israelites = initiates) His Glory and Greatness, and we have heard His Voice from the midst of the Fire. Today we have seen that God may speak with men without them dying!"⁸² (DEUT.5:24).

"After the Fire there came a low murmuring Sound. When Elijah heard this he covered his head with his cloak."⁸³ (1stKINGS 19:12).

⁸² It was generally believed by Jews at this time that actually seeing or hearing God would result in physical death; see e.g. EXOD.20:19; 33:20; & NUM.4:20; cf. 1stJOHN 4:12. This verse, and many others throughout the Bible, clearly contradicts such notions. Today many people believe that death is a prerequisite for any such personal contact with God!

⁸³ Covering the head and body with a meditation cloth (veil) while in communion with God is a requirement to this day for Mystic Initiates. An

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"It is not in speech or language that the [Heavenly] Voice is heard! This Voice vibrates throughout all the Earth, and the Word reaches to the ends of the world. These are set within the Tabernacle of the [Heavenly] Sun." (PSA.19:3-4).

"God arises with a mighty Sound, Yahweh with a Sound like a horn." (PSA.47:5).

"I (God) answer you (a disciple) in the Secret Place of My Thunder." (PSA.81:7).

"Blessed are those who know the Blissful Sound." (PSA.89:15).

"Suddenly, in an instant, you (initiates of the Mystery) shall be visited by the Lord of hosts, with the Thundering and Vibrations of the Mighty Sound." (ISAIAH 29:6).

early example of this practice is when Moses communes with God: "He (Moses) would put a veil over his face whenever he went inwards to commune with the Lord; and he would remove the veil when he came out to report to the children of Israel all that he had been commanded, and the sons of Israel would then see that the face of Moses shone radiantly. Moses would put the veil over his face again when he went in to speak to Him (God)." (EXOD.34:33-35). Many English translations of this passage are nonsensical – confusing and destroying the true significance and meaning of the original by implying that Moses covered his face only when he came out from communing with God. If that were the case, how would Moses have communicated with the Israelites, and how would they have seen that his face shone, and, indeed, how would Moses have seen where he was going? See also 1stKINGS 19:12-13. Even today, the practice of covering the head is traditionally observed by many orthodox religionists during worship, e.g. all Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs. This covering, or veil, should actually enclose the whole body, and is often termed the "Tabernacle" / "Tent of Meeting", i.e. the private place of meeting with God / Elohim / the Spirit. See also, Appendix 6, p.191.

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"Joy and gladness shall be found therein (in the Lord's Spiritual Kingdom), **thanksgiving and the melodious Sound.**" (ISAIAH 51:3).

"From His Holy dwelling He utters His Voice." (JER.25:30).

"I (Ezekiel) heard the Sound of their (angels) **wings,**⁸⁴ **like the sound of rushing water, or the Voice of the Almighty.**" (EZEK.1:24).

"The Spirit raised me (Ezekiel) **up, and I heard behind me a great rushing Sound as the Glory of the Lord arose in its Abode."** (EZEK.3:12).

"The Temple court was filled with the Brightness of the Lord's Glory, and the Sound of cherubs' wings could be heard like the Voice of God Almighty when He speaks." (EZEK.10:4-5).

"I (Ezekiel) saw the Glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His Voice was like the sound of a mighty torrent, and the Earth shone with His Glory." (EZEK.43:2).

"I (Daniel) could then understand because of the Sound and the Great Word which the [Sound like a]

⁸⁴ Orthodoxy has always believed God's Kingdom (Heaven, Paradise, etc.) to be a place somewhere high up in the sky! Early Jewish tradition held that God's Messengers (Angels) must therefore descend from Heaven on ladders in order to deliver messages to humankind (see e.g. GEN.28:12). Later tradition presumed that Angels had 'wings' to enable them to commute between Heaven and Earth. Such beliefs are merely 'fairy-tales' initiated by those of a childish and materialistic mentality, and propagated by various Spiritually ignorant orthodoxies. Whether this passage represents Ezekiel's original words cannot be known – if it does, he must have merely been using the reference to Angel's "wings" symbolically of the ineffable Sound of the Spirit.

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horn revealed." (DAN.7:11).

"He (the Lord) will send His Messengers with the Great Sound like trumpets, and they will gather all His chosen ones." (MATT.24:31).

"A Voice came from Heaven... some who heard it said it sounded like thunder, while others said it was the Voice of an angel." (JOHN 12:28-29).

"Suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven like that of a mighty wind." (ACTS.2:2).

"While I (John) was in the Spirit I heard a great Voice, like the sound of a trumpet." (REV.1:10).

"His (God's) Voice was like the sound of rushing waters." (REV.1:15).

"The door of Heaven opened and I (John) heard the first Voice which sounded like a trumpet speaking to me." (REV.4:1).

"I (John) saw the Lamb break open the first of the seven seals, and I heard a Sound like thunder as one of the four⁸⁵ Holy Beings said: 'Come'!" (REV.6:1).

"I (John) heard a Sound from Heaven like the sound of rushing waters and the great roar of thunder: it seemed to be the sound of harpists playing their harps." (REV.14:2).

"I (John) heard what sounded like a vast crowd, like

⁸⁵ Note this reference to "four" Spiritual manifestations ("Holy Beings") – the very things we are presently studying, viz. The Divine 'Name', 'Light', 'Sound', and 'Food'. See GEN.2:10; EZEK.1:5-17; 10:10-21; 37:9; DAN.7:2; ZECH.6:1-5; REV.4:6; 5:14; 6:6; 14:3; & 19:4.

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the sound of many waters and the great roar of thunder." (REV.19:6).

"The Lord said to me (Ezra): '*Rise up* (i.e. into Spiritual consciousness) *and you will hear a great and completely harmonious Sound; but do not be frightened when you hear it vibrating within you.'*... I rose up and listened, and beheld a Voice speaking, and its sound was like the sound of mighty waters."

(2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 6:13 & 17).

"You (the Lord) *bringest forth the Sound according to Thy Mysteries.*" (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Hymn' 1).

"As they (the initiates) *rise up* (in the Spirit) *they hear a Divine Small Voice.*" (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Liturgical Fragments' – 'The Divine Throne-Chariot').

"Wait, and you (Baruch) *will see the Glory of God; and there came a great Sound like thunder.*" (3rdBARUCH 11:2-3).

"That he (Enoch) *might see the highest realms and be an eye-witness of the... inexpressible Singing of the host of Cherubim, and of the boundless Light.*"

(2ndENOCH [J] 1a:2-6).

"My (an initiate's) *ear has heard the Sound like a trumpet... like the sound of many people, like a great high wind, like a tempest... The Sound which I hear is from Jerusalem⁸⁶ – the Holy City.*" (Psalms of Solomon 8:1-4).

"The Angels guarding Paradise are very radiant. They

⁸⁶ 'Jerusalem' means: "Foundation of Peace". The true (Spiritual) Jerusalem is not located on a map or built of bricks and mortar! It is another term originally used of the Heavenly abode of God (the Spirit).

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serve before the Lord unceasingly with sweet Singing and incessant Voice." (2ndENOCH 8:8).

"In the midst of Heaven I (Enoch) saw the host of God worshipping with drums and pipes and unceasing sweet Voices, the Music of which is impossible to describe. Every mind is astonished at hearing the Sounds of the Angels, so marvellous and wonderful is their Singing." (2ndENOCH 17:1).

"I (Enoch) have heard the Voice of the Lord, like great thunder." (2ndENOCH 39:7).

"I (Adam) used to hear, before I sinned, the Sound of the Seraphim's wings in Paradise... but after I transgressed against the Law, I no longer heard that Sound." (Testament of Adam 1:4).

"He whom you (Abraham) will see coming directly towards us in the great Sound of Sanctification is the Eternal One who has loved you." (Apocalypse of Abraham 16:3).

"A Voice came from the Fire (of God) like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the sea in its uproar." (Apocalypse of Abraham 17:1).

"I (Abraham) heard a Voice like the roaring of the sea, and it did not cease from the perfection of the Fire [of God]." (Apocalypse of Abraham 18:2).

"We (James and Peter) sent our minds farther upward and saw with our [inner] eyes and heard with our [inner] ears Hymns and Angelic Benedictions and rejoicing." (Coptic – Apocryphon of James, p.15:15-20).

"I (the Lord) am the Name of the Sound, and the Sound

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of the Name." (Coptic – Thunder, Perfect Mind, p.20:31-33).

"We are saved by the hidden Wisdom mediated by the ineffable, immeasurable Voice." (Coptic – Trimorphic Protennoia, p.36:35-36).

***"It is I (the Saviour) who lift up the Sound of the Voice to the ears of those who know Me, that is, to the sons of Light* (i.e. initiates)."** (Coptic – Trimorphic Protennoia, p.42:14-16).

"I (the Saviour) cast the Sound of the Voice into the ears of those who know Me." (Coptic – Trimorphic Protennoia, p.45:10-11).

These passages refer to, and attempt to describe, the great *indescribable* Mystic Sound of the Divine Spirit (God). This Sound or Voice of God is actually heard while in a state of deep meditation. It is not an external sound to be heard with our external ears, but through esoteric Spiritual senses, which are revealed during Initiation by a genuine Master. For a selection of passages on this subject from scriptures of other religions – see Appendix 4, page 179.

We now come to the fourth and final heading in our list: the Spiritual "FOOD" (or "DRINK") from God. This may seem a strange title, but it refers to the inner Spiritual sustenance, which is revealed by all genuine Masters, and universally experienced by Mystic initiates. This Mystic Sustenance (food or drink) is spoken of throughout the scriptures of all the great world religions. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition it has been called "manna", "bread from Heaven", "milk and honey", "living water", "elixir", etc; while in the east it has been referred to as "nectar", "ambrosia", "soma", "amrita", etc. – i.e. the Divine 'food of

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the Gods':

"I (the Lord) have come down to deliver them... and to raise them up out of this land, to a great and good place, a [Spiritual] land flowing with Milk and Honey." (EXOD.3:8).

"The Israelites called the Heavenly Food 'Manna'... and the taste was like honey." (EXOD.16:31).

"The Israelites sang this song: 'Well up, O spring of [Spiritual] Water! Greet it with song: the Holy Spring unearthened by [Divine] Princes (i.e. Messiahs), revealed by the Noble [Holy] Ones'." (NUM.21:17-18).

"He (the Lord) fed you (the Israelites) with Manna, which neither you nor your fathers had previously known, in order that you might know that [Spiritual] man does not live by [physical] bread." (DEUT.8:3).

"God then opened up a hollow place within his (Samson's) jaw, and water began to flow out. Samson drank and immediately the Spirit revived him; thus he called this [inner] Spring: 'the Well of the invoker' (i.e. of those who invoke the living God)." (JUDGES 15:19).

"They (the initiated) feast on the bounty of Your (Yahweh's) House; You give them drink from Your abundant River of [Spiritual] Pleasure." (PSA.36:8).

"He (the Lord) commanded the highest realms, and opened the doors of Heaven, He rained down Manna to feed them (the Israelites), He gave them the Bread of Heaven. So men ate the Immortal Food which satisfies the heart." (PSA.78:23-25).

"Whoever lacks [Divine] Knowledge, let him turn within; and to those who seek understanding, Wisdom

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says: 'Come, eat of my [Spiritual] Bread, and drink the [Spiritual] Wine which I have prepared.' (PROV.9:4-5).

"Eat the [Spiritual] Honey, My son, for it is good; and let the sweetness be upon thy tongue: thus shall Wisdom be revealed in your soul." (PROV.24:13-14).

"Your lips, My Promised One, drip sweet Honey: Honey and Milk are under your tongue." (Song of Songs 4:11).

"Butter and Honey shall he (a disciple of the Lord) eat, when he decides to reject evil and choose what is good." (ISAIAH 7:15).

"With joy shall you (the initiate) draw Water from the Well of Salvation." (ISAIAH 12:3).

"Come to the Water all you who are [Spiritually] thirsty; though you have no money, come! Buy Corn without money and eat, and, free of price, drink Wine and Milk. Why do you spend money on that which cannot truly satisfy?" (ISAIAH 55:1-2).

"He (God) said to me (Ezekiel): 'Son of man, eat and fill yourself with this scroll that I give you.' So I ate, and it tasted as sweet as honey." (EZEK.3:3).

"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David (i.e. the beloved of God) and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (i.e. the Spiritual Abode of Peace), to cleanse them from sin and impurity." (ZEC.13:1).

"You (the Lord) give Your chosen people the Food of angels: Bread from Heaven ready prepared, rich in delight and satisfying to every taste." (WISDOM 16:20).

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"Our Father in Heaven... give us today Your Supersubstantial (Eternal / Spiritual)⁸⁷ Bread." (MATT.6:9 & 11).

"Whoever drinks of the Water that I (the Lord) give shall never thirst again; for the Water that I give is an inner Spring: the Well of Eternal Life." (JOHN 4:14).

"Jesus said to them: 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about'." (JOHN 4:32).

"Strive not for food which perishes, but for the Food which lasts and gives Eternal Life, which the Son of Man will give you... My Father gives the true Bread from Heaven; for the Bread of God is that which comes down from Heaven and gives [Spiritual] Life to the world." (JOHN 6:27-33).

"From within you (initiated disciples) shall flow streams of Living Water." (JOHN 7:38).

"They (the Israelites) all ate the same Spiritual Food, and drank the same Spiritual Drink; for they drank from the Spiritual Rock." (1stCOR.10:3-4).

"To those who are victorious I (the Lord) will give the hidden Manna." (REV.2:17).

"The Lamb who is at the heart of the [Heavenly] Throne will be their shepherd, and shall lead them to the Fountain of Life-giving Water." (REV.7:17).

⁸⁷ Supersubstantial is meant to render literally the difficult Greek word 'epiousios', which is often incorrectly translated as "daily". It actually means: "of Eternity" i.e. Spiritual Bread – the Eternal Bread or 'Manna' from Heaven.

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"To those who thirst I (the Lord) will give of the Water of Life freely." (REV.21:6).

"My (an initiate's) eyes have gazed on that which is Eternal, on Wisdom concealed from men... on a Spring of Glory hidden from carnal men." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Community Rule' Col. XI).

"I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast placed me (an initiate) beside the Fountain of Living Waters in this arid land... beside the Garden of Delight in this wilderness... trees of Life beside a Fountain of Mystery... No one shall approach that Well-Spring of Life or drink the Waters of Holiness... who seeing have not discerned, and considering have not believed in the Fountain of Life." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Hymn' 14).

"May the Lord open for you from Heaven the Eternal Fountain which does not fail... May He unlock for you the everlasting Fountain; may He not withhold the Water of Life from them that thirst!" (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Liturgical Fragments').

"Those who honour the True and Eternal God inherit Life, dwelling in the luxuriant garden of [Spiritual] Paradise throughout Eternity, feasting on sweet Bread from starry Heaven." (Sibylline Oracles 1:46-49).

"From Heaven shall come a sweet draught of luscious Honey." (Sibylline Oracles 3:746).

"An Ambrosial Stream distilling sweet Honey from rock and fountain, and Heavenly Milk will flow for all the Righteous." (Sibylline Oracles 5:282).

"Having washed off all their former vices with the

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Waters of the Immortal Spring, so that, born from above, they may no longer serve the lawless customs of this (carnal / material) world." (Sibylline Oracles 8:315).

"The souls of the Righteous are separated by the Spring of Enlightenment Water which they have." (1stENOCH 22:9).

"And there flowed fourth from them (the trees of Paradise) Nectar." (1stENOCH 31:1).

"I (Enoch) saw the Fountain of Righteousness which is inexhaustible, and around it were many Fountains of Wisdom. All those who thirst drink of them and are filled with Wisdom." (1stENOCH 48:1).

"Springs come forth from Paradise which send out [Spiritual] Honey and Milk." (2ndENOCH 8:5).

"Open Your (the Lord's) bountiful Springs which abundantly supply us with Milk and Honey." (Odes of Solomon 4:10).

"From the Most High the Drink was given. Blessed, therefore, are the Ministers of that Drink, who have been entrusted with that Water of His." (Odes of Solomon 6:12-13).

"Drink My (the Lord's) Holy Milk and thus you will Live." (Odes of Solomon 8:14).

"From the Lord's Spring came Enlightenment Water in abundance to my (an initiate's) lips. I drank and became intoxicated with the Living Water of Eternal Life; but my drunkenness was not that of ignorance, for I forsook vanity and turned to God Most High."

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(Odes of Solomon 11:6-8).

"Fill yourselves with Water from the Living Spring of the Lord, for it has been opened to you (initiates). Come all you who thirst, and take the Drink, and rest by the Fountain of the Lord. For it is pleasing and pure, and gives rest to the soul. More pleasant is its Water than honey, and the honeycomb of bees is not to be compared with it. For it flows from the lips of the Lord, and from the heart of the Lord is it named. And it comes boundless and invisible, and until it is set in their midst they do not know it. Blessed are they who have drunk from it, and have found rest thereby." (Odes of Solomon 30:1-7).

"I (Ezra) opened my mouth, and behold, a cup was offered me; it was full of something like water, but its colour was like fire. I took it and drank; and when I had finished my heart overflowed with [Spiritual] Understanding." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 14:39-40).

"For in them (the Spiritually Wise, i.e. initiates) is the Spring of Understanding, the Fountain of Wisdom, and the River of Knowledge." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 14:47).

"All of you (the uninitiated) are sleeping, dreaming dreams. Wake up and return, taste and eat the true Food! Hand out the Word and the Water of Life!" (Coptic – Concept of Our Great Power, p.40:1-5).

"Satisfy yourselves with the true Wine in which there is no drunkenness nor error." (Coptic – Teaching of Silvanus, p.107:28-30).

"It is a hidden Light, bearing the fruit of Life, pouring forth Living Water from the invisible, unpolluted,

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immeasurable Spring." (Coptic – Trimorphic Protennoia, p.46:16-19).

"I gave to him from the Living Water, which strips away the chaos that exists in darkness." (Coptic – Trimorphic Protennoia, p.48:7-9).

"In the crown of the head is the King established: Who, with His Immortal Food, nourishes them that are founded upon Him... They glorify the Father of All... whose immortal and never failing Food they have received, and have drunk of the Wine that removes all worldly thirsts and desires." (ACTS of Thomas 6-7).

"Give them drink out of Thy Immortal Fountain." (ACTS of Thomas 25).

"We (initiates) speak of the world which is above: of God and Angels, of Watchers and Holy Ones, of the Immortal Food and the Sacred Drink of the True Vine." (ACTS of Thomas 36).

"Blessed are the ministers of that quenching [Spiritual] Drink, to whom the Lord's Water is entrusted... For they all Know their True Self through the Lord, and are saved through the Water of Eternal Life." (Pistis Sophia).

For passages from scriptures of other religions describing this Mystic Sustenance – the "Food of the Gods – see Appendix 5, page 185.

Thus, the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity speak of the four Mystic manifestations of the Spirit of God – the Holy **NAME, LIGHT, SOUND, and FOOD!** Although orthodox religionists have no first-hand knowledge of the reality of these esoteric experiences, they do, in fact, still

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represent each of them in their various exoteric rites and rituals, and by the use of various material symbols. For instance, every religion – including the most primitive tribal religion – has a pronounceable word, which is identified as the 'Name' of God; a mere exoteric label that is itself claimed to possess Mystic Power! For Jews it is 'Yahweh'; for Christians it is 'Jesus', 'Father', or simply 'God'; Muslims use the term 'Allah'; Hindus and Buddhists generally use the term 'Brahman'; while for Sikhs it is 'Akal', etc. Also, in all their various places of worship the Mystic inner Light is merely symbolised by a burning candle, lamp, torch, or similar external altar light (in primitive religions a fire or flame is often the centrepiece of their worship). The Mystic Sound is commonly represented by means of various musical instruments (e.g. church organs, horns, cymbals, drums, etc.) and/or the singing or chanting of a choir. Finally, the True Spiritual Food is replaced by mere physical food and drink, such as the Christian Eucharist, and a variety of similar offerings in all other religions. These materialistic imitations of the genuine Spiritual experiences are regarded by the various orthodoxies as having real salvational power. Is it any wonder why the world is in the state it is, when even those who believe themselves to be followers of God/Truth are guided by nothing more than materialism, emotion, and erroneous beliefs and practices? At the beginning of this century, there was at least one open-minded member of the Christian clergy – the Rev. F. Lamplugh – who, to some extent, recognised the error of the orthodox churches. Of the so-called Gnostic 'heresy', he wrote: "*Recent investigations have challenged the traditional outlook and the traditional conclusions and the traditional facts. With some today, and with many more tomorrow, the burning question is, or will be – not how did a particularly silly and licentious heresy rise within the church – but how did the church rise out of the great Gnostic movement, and how did the*

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dynamic ideas of the Gnosis become crystallised into dogmas?"

To Know God is not merely to know things *about* Him, such as his character, but to actually experience His presence and power. To know God is to be transformed by Him. Human knowledge of God is a result of God's revelation of Himself! Until the whole church, and every religion – indeed, every single person in the world – opens up to the Truth and realises the existence of the 'living' Master, and turns to Him in order to be initiated into the Mysteries, and thus gaining the Knowledge and guidance of the Spirit, only then will it be possible for genuine Peace, Truth, and Love to reign on Earth! In the meanwhile, those relatively few initiates who do know this beautiful experience, can only try to spread the 'good news' (= gospel) to those with ears to hear, as they have done since the beginning.

In the preceding chapters, we have seen that it is only through the physically present *living* Master that we may receive the genuine esoteric / Mystic Knowledge (Gnosis) of God (the Spirit). We have also seen that this Knowledge consists of very real and personal experiences of actually SEEING, HEARING, TASTING, and FEELING – through our Spiritual senses – the very Essence of God, the Father. Orthodox religions have completely reversed this Truth – they have actually *materialised* the four Spiritual characteristics / manifestations of God,⁸⁸ and have *spiritualised* the physical presence of the very revealer of these Mysteries: the Lord / man-god / Christ!⁸⁹ As previously mentioned, it does not require much thought

⁸⁸ i.e. in their exoteric / material imitations of the Spirit, viz. their symbolic sacraments, rites and rituals.

⁸⁹ All orthodox religions deny that God or the Christ is currently incarnate on Earth (with the exception of some eastern religions). Christians believe that the Messiah / Christ is now present only in Spirit!

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to comprehend why the priests of orthodoxy have proceeded in this way; firstly, they simply have no personal first-hand knowledge of the Sacred Mysteries. Secondly, if they were to recognise and acknowledge a current living Master, they would realise that there is no need for a hierarchy of worldly ministers and theologians, and thus their cherished positions of honour and respect – in fact their very livelihood – would disappear! One only has to look at the carefree and comfortable (even luxurious) lifestyle of these ministers of institutionalised religion to comprehend their reluctance to accept or admit the Truth!⁹⁰

⁹⁰ The Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, receives a salary (stipend) which is several times higher than the British national average. In 1937, when the church was more influential, his salary was approximately 50 times the national average! On top of this he is provided with a palatial residence, and always invited to (and given the most exalted seat at) all royal banquets, etc. Cf. MATT.23:6 & 11:8.

Initiation and Experience

**"He (the Lord) gave them the means of
Knowing the Knowledge of the Father."**

(Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.30:24-26).

This chapter will provide further evidence, gleaned from the Mystic texts of Judaism and Christianity, relating the Sacred initiation of various disciples of Yahweh into the ancient Gnosis of Truth. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the most common phrase used in the Judaeo-Christian tradition for this initiation is: "*the laying on of hands*", a process whereby a Master actually reveals to a disciple four sacred techniques of experiencing and communing with God within – the very *Gift of the Holy Spirit*. The earliest account of this is to be found in the first book of the Bible:

"*Israel* (i.e. the 'Seer' – Jacob⁹¹) stretched out his right hand and laid it on *Ephraim's head.*" (GEN.48:14).

"*Your right hand, Lord, reveals Your Glory and Strength: it destroys the enemy.*" (EXOD.15:6).

The enemy referred to here is, in truth, the eternal enemy of God – the root of Spiritual ignorance and error = satan (Hebrew: *adversary*). What satan actually is will be revealed in the next chapter.

"*Present the Levites⁹² before Yahweh, and then the Israelites* (i.e. the initiated 'Seers of God') *shall lay their hands on them... so that they may dedicate themselves to the service of Yahweh.*" (NUM.8:9-11).

"*Yahweh said to Moses: 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom the Spirit dwells, and lay your hand on him.'*" (NUM.27:18).

⁹¹ See above, p.36 note 41.

⁹² In Hebrew: 'Levi' = "adherent" (disciple of) or "united" (with God); in this passage the Levites referred to were obviously sincere disciples (i.e. 'adherents') of the Lord.

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"... From Yahweh's right hand comes the Fire of Truth." (DEUT.33:2).

Note the great variety of very different English translations of this verse, showing the complete lack of Spiritual understanding of the translators! The "Fire of Truth" is simply another expression for the Mystic "Light of God" revealed through Initiation by the hand of a genuine Master.

"Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the Spirit of Wisdom, for Moses had laid his hand on him." (DEUT.34:9).

"Samuel did not yet know Yahweh, for the [Mystic] Word (or Holy Name of God) had not yet been revealed to him... so the Lord came again to Shiloh; and there revealed Himself to Samuel by His Word." (1stSAM.3:7 & 21).

"Yahweh has made known to me (a disciple) the Way of [Spiritual] Life; His presence brings great joy and Fulfilment; His right hand gives everlasting Bliss." (PSA.16:11).

"Show the Wonders of Your Love, You who save with Your right hand those who trust in You." (PSA.17:7).

"Now I know that Yahweh is our Saviour and Messiah; He hears from His Holy Heaven and saves by the power of His right hand." (PSA.20:6).

"He (the Lord) brought them (the Israelites) into His Holy Place: to the [Spiritual] heights acquired through His right hand." (PSA.78:54).

"The Voice of Bliss and Salvation is within the

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tabernacles⁹³ of the Righteous: the right hand of the Lord has shown them His Power." (PSA.118:15).

This is a reference to the experience of the Mystic Sound or Voice of God heard while meditating within one's *tabernacle* – an experience revealed by the 'hand' of the living Master..

"His (God's) brightness was like the sunlight; rays streamed from His hand, and this was the hiding place of His power." (HAB.3:4).

"Wisdom comes from Initiation into the Mysteries of God's Knowledge." (WISDOM 8:4).

"No one knows the Father (Elohim – the Spirit) except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." (MATT.11:27).

"Jesus said to them (initiated disciples): 'The Mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom have been revealed to you, but to them (the uninitiated/outsiders) they are not given'." (MATT.13:11).

"Jesus said: 'I thank thee Father (Elohim), Lord of Heaven and Earth, for hiding these things (the Sacred Mysteries) from the learned and clever, and revealing them to babes (i.e. humble and open-minded seekers)." (LUKE 10:21).

"They presented these men (seven disciples chosen for ministry) to the Apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them." (ACTS.6:6).

"John (the Baptist) baptised with water (i.e. symbolic /

⁹³ For an explanation of what is meant by 'tabernacles', see above, page 97, note 83; and also Appendix 6, p.191.

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exoteric initiation – as orthodoxy!), ***but you*** (those who go to a genuine living Master) ***will be baptised with the Holy Spirit!"*** (ACTS.1:5; cf. JOHN 1:25-26).

"As yet the Spirit had not come to them (certain uninitiated disciples); ***for they had only been baptised in the*** [exoteric] ***name of the Lord: 'Jesus'.*** ***So Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."*** (ACTS.8:16-17).

Ministers of Christianity merely place their hands on the heads of followers, and merely recite the words: "*in the name of 'Jesus'"*", imagining that the spirit is now with them. However, this is not the truth, as the above passage makes clear, and cannot be compared with truly receiving the Divine Mysteries from a genuine Spiritual Master like Jesus Himself, or one of His genuine Apostles.

"Paul asked them: 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They answered: 'No; we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit!' Then Paul asked: 'How, then, were you baptised?' And they said: 'With John's (the Baptist's) baptism.' Paul then said: 'John's baptism (i.e. 'water' baptism) ***is only symbolic of repentance'... On hearing this they were baptised into the*** [Mystic] ***Name of the Lord when Paul laid his hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit."*** (ACTS.19:2-6).

The previous three passages clearly state that mere 'water' baptism, or baptism in the *common* (exoteric) name 'Jesus' – which is the method used by all Christian churches – are only symbolic of the real esoteric (Mystic / Spiritual) Initiation imparted by genuine 'Apostles' of the living Lord.

"It (the Knowledge of Truth and Righteousness) ***is revealed by*** [God's] ***Fire*** (i.e. the Mystic Light)."

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(1stCOR.3:13).

"It was by revelation that the Sacred Mystery was made known to me (Paul)." (EPH.3:3).

"He (the Lord) laid His right hand on me (John), and said: 'Fear not; I am the first and the last.'" (REV.1:17).

"We (Baruch and his Holy companion) cannot enter [the gates of Heaven] until Michael comes, who holds the 'Keys' to the [Spiritual] Kingdom; so wait, and you will see the Glory of God." (3rdBARUCH 11:2).

Note here the use of the term 'Keys' to the Heavenly Kingdom. This is a frequently used expression referring to the four sacred techniques (one for each of the Spiritual experiences "NAME", "LIGHT", "SOUND", and "FOOD") which are revealed during Mystic Initiation (see e.g. ISAIAH 22:22; MATT.16:19; LUKE 11:52; & REV.3:7).

"The good tidings of Truth are a joy for those who have received from the Father of Truth the gift of Knowing Him through the Power of His Word." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.16:31-34).

"These are the good tidings of the One who is searched for, which were revealed to those perfected through the grace of the Father – by the hidden Mystery of Jesus, the Christ. Through it (the Mystery) He Enlightened those who were in darkness." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.18:11-17).

"He (the Lord) gave them the means of Knowing the Knowledge (Gnosis) of the Father: through the [Mystic] Revelation of His Son." (Coptic – Gospel of Truth, p.30:24-26).

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"Those who say 'they will die first and then rise' are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing." (Coptic – Gospel of Philip, p.73:1-4).

"Jesus said: 'If those who lead you say to you: 'The [Spiritual] Kingdom is in the sky', then the birds will surely reach it before you. And if they say: 'It is under the sea', then the fish will surely precede you! Rather, the Kingdom is inside you, and it is outside you. When you come to Know your [Spiritual] Selves, then you will become known, and you will realise that it is you who are the sons of the living Father. But if you do not Know your [inner / Spiritual] Selves, you dwell in [Spiritual] poverty, and it is you who are that poverty'." (Coptic – Gospel of Thomas 3).

"I (John – the 'Evangelist') asked the Lord: 'Can a man be saved by the baptism of John (the 'Baptist', i.e. 'water' baptism) without Your [Spiritual] Baptism?' The Lord answered: 'Unless I have Baptised to forgive all sins, the baptism of water will not allow men to see the Kingdom of Heaven'... And I asked the Lord: 'Why do so many men receive the baptism of John, but do not receive Your Baptism?' The Lord answered: 'Because their deeds are evil and they are afraid to come to the Light!'" (Book of John the Evangelist).

Some of the passages we have been looking at in this study may well be rejected, in one way or another, as spurious – and no argument will be given against such a claim. But surely, no Spiritually inclined soul will reject all these passages, along with their Mystic interpretations and implications.

Jesus is reported to have continually condemned, en masse, the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees – who

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were the 'orthodox' Jewish religionists of his day, and equivalent to the various theologians and clergy of our present variety of Christian denominations. These religious leaders were, in general, educated, sincere, and pious *believers* in God, and possessed as much zealous love (or attachment) and pride for their religion as do our own clergy today – but they failed to recognise Jesus as the living Master of that time! They were too occupied with the legalistic, academic, historic, materialistic, and ritualistic aspects of their beloved religion. To them, a historic Master (e.g. Moses), the 'literal' laws (e.g. their scriptures), and the performance of various traditional exoteric rites and rituals were all-important – so what did a simple carpenter's son from Galilee matter? Unfortunately, many dedicated religionists today have similar values, and have precisely the same attitude to the possibility of a contemporary Master living today. In fact many people have commented that if Jesus were to return today, so-called 'Christians' would be amongst the first to persecute, ridicule, or ignore him!

Returning to the subject of initiation and the experience of the Holy Spirit, it must be agreed that many people who follow traditional orthodox religions do obtain some very powerful experiences of one kind or another. However, the difference between emotional and Spiritual experiences must be clearly understood. An emotional experience is obtained through external stimuli (i.e. the mind's interpretation of the physical senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) or is the result of an indirect subjective process, such as memory, association, or introspection. For instance, powerful emotions may be aroused by *viewing* certain movies, or by *listening* to various types of music, etc. By partaking in traditional religious services all one's physical senses may be stimulated in a similar way. One's vision is engulfed by the elaborate and solemn grandeur and the *holy*

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atmosphere of the sacred building and the various theatrical 'props' used therein (e.g. the awe-inspiring symbols: the statues, images, icons, etc, and the princely / angelic robes of the clergy⁹⁴). On the other hand, an environment of complete frugality may be used to gain the required effect. The sense of hearing is usually stimulated by majestic organ music, the singing of hymns and chanting of prayers, and the hypnotic monotones of the *holy* chant used by many ministers when reciting their liturgies, etc. Conversely, absolute silence may sometimes be utilised to obtain the desired effect. Even the senses of taste, touch, and smell may be aroused by the various rituals and customs, e.g. the Eucharist, and the burning of incense, etc. These physical / exoteric methods of arousing the emotions of a congregation are common to all religions, even the most primitive tribal religions stimulate their followers to states of mental / physical / emotional ecstasy by like means – and that goes for Satanists and Voodoo worshippers too!⁹⁵ There are also other methods of producing powerful emotional / physiological trance experiences e.g. vigorous dancing (as in the Muslim order of Mawlawiyah (Arabic) or Mevlevi (Turkish) – the "whirling dervishes;" and the Hari Krishna sect), prolonged fasting, exhaustion from nutritional disturbance, unusual excitement, solitary confinement, drugs, alcohol, etc. The experiences obtained from all these methods can have a profound effect on one's perceptions, even to the extent of producing pseudo-spiritual hallucinations, delirium, and/or schizophrenic seizures.⁹⁶ Such practices, when used for so-called

⁹⁴ This 'holy' regalia reminds us of the warning to "beware of wolves dressed in sheep's clothing", and the criticisms of Jesus about those who love to dress in robes to give the impression of holiness.

⁹⁵ Such methods of inciting emotions are also very familiar to theatre and movie directors. Hitler also used such methods to great success at his rallies in Nazi Germany.

⁹⁶ For a detailed study of these phenomena of physiologically induced states of ecstasy, see e.g. W. Sargant: "*THE MIND POSSESSED*".

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religious purposes, often result in the phenomenon of the participant uttering incomprehensible sounds – referred to by such pseudo-religionists as "speaking in tongues." Such experiences are common to all shamanistic religions and have no connection with the Spirit of Truth, but are simply delusive imitations – referred to in various scriptures as the power or spirit of evil and error - Satan.

The genuine Spiritual experience of God does not come from physical or mental sense stimuli, or mere 'beliefs' in God. It is only when one has overcome the power of mind – which is always leading us astray – and all our roaming thoughts, that we may experience the Great Silent Reality of the Spirit. And this only becomes possible through the direct Revelation, Grace, and Knowledge of the *living* Lord – the present Master of our own day. It is only He who can truly take us beyond the realms of our physical, psychic, and mental nature, far beyond our finite intellect, to the very Kingdom of Light hidden deep within our Soul. No words can adequately describe that experience of Pure Bliss – it must be personally attained and experienced in order to be truly understood.

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"Ignorance is the mother of all evil."

(Coptic – Gospel of Philip, p.83:30).

There is one single reason for all the differing interpretations of religious scripture, and which has led to the countless diverse beliefs about Truth, and that is simply Spiritual ignorance – a lack of Divine Knowledge (Gnosis).⁹⁷ This has resulted in the numerous sects, factions and creeds, which are continually being established in every religion. To be certain of understanding Holy Scripture correctly, one must first attain the same level of Spiritual experience as the various authors of such works, thus a genuine Spiritual Master is required to reveal the true interpretation of such writings. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, taught that, in matters of Spirituality, it is necessary to seek out genuine Knowledge by exposing false pretensions. Ignorance is the only source of evil, he argued, so it is improper to act out of ignorance or to accept Spiritual instruction from those who have not proven their own Wisdom. Instead of relying blindly on authority, we should unceasingly question our own beliefs and the beliefs of others in order to seek out genuine Wisdom. He also taught that every person has full Knowledge of Ultimate Truth contained within their soul, and needs only to be spurred to conscious reflection to realise Truth (hence his advice: '*Know Thyself*'). This is precisely what a living Master does – by revealing the means for each and every disciple to see within themselves and discover the Spark of the Divine, which lies hidden deep inside the Soul.

⁹⁷ "(Israel's) guardians (priests and politicians) are blind, they all lack KNOWLEDGE (of God); they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep. They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain." (ISAIAH 56:10-11).

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It must also be understood that genuine Spiritual Scriptures are not 'historic' or 'futuristic' documents – all such writings are perpetually current. There are, indeed, many passages which have been included in the orthodox Judaeo-Christian canon of scripture, which are historic or futuristic, but these are either stories intended to teach an eternal (and therefore 'current') lesson, or they are merely mundane / secular insertions (e.g. genealogies, etc.), which have no useful place in genuine Holy books. When Scripture speaks about the coming of the Kingdom of God etc., it is not speaking strictly of the 'future', but simply *that* time – *any* time (including the present) – when an individual turns to a living Master and is initiated into the Sacred Mysteries of the Spirit. Thus, for such an individual, the Heavenly Kingdom is a current and real experience, which brings about a radical change of consciousness – commonly called "re-birth" or "resurrection."

"Those who say they will [physically] die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing." (Coptic – Gospel of Philip, p.73:1-4).

"Look for your Shepherd, for He will give you everlasting rest; for He who comes to end the [carnal] era is close at hand. Be ready for the rewards of the Kingdom: the Eternal Light which will shine on you for evermore. Flee from the shadow of this [carnal] world, and receive the joy and Splendour; I (Ezra) testify openly of the Saviour. Receive the Gift (i.e. of Spiritual Initiation / Revelation) which the Lord offers you, and be joyful, giving thanks to Him who has called you to the Heavenly Kingdom. Arise, stand up, and see all those who have been sealed at the Lord's feast. Those who have departed from the shadow of this age have received Shining robes from the Lord." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 2:34-39).

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"I (an initiate) rose up into the Light of Truth as if on a chariot, and the Truth took me and led me over pits and gulleys... and became for me a haven of Salvation, and set me on the level of Immortal Life... Error flees away from it (the Spirit of Truth) and never contacts it; for Truth proceeds on the right path, and whatever I did not know, it made clear to me: all the drugs of error, and the plagues of death which are considered sweetness (i.e. by the uninitiated)... And I asked the Truth: 'Who are these?' And Truth replied: 'This is the Deceiver and the Error, those who imitate the Beloved and His Bride, and they cause the world to err and corrupt it. They invite many to their banquet and allow them to drink the wine of their intoxication and thus make them mindless'." (Odes of Solomon 38:1-13).

It is abundantly clear from such passages that we must KNOW God DURING our life on Earth; it is not sufficient to merely maintain blind-faith and cling to 'beliefs' – no matter how sincere! To know God means to have the very same experience as all the genuine Seers / Gnostics themselves – to become a Seer! Without this experience (viz. the Beatific Vision; Hebrew: *Shekhînâh*) one is actually blind to the Truth, and therefore in a state of ignorance and error: "*When there is no Vision [of God] the people fall away [from Truth].*" (PROV.29:18).

NOW is definitely the message of all Holy scripture; the past and future are unimportant – they do not even exist in the timelessness of God. The message is always the same: the Messiah *is* here – in the flesh – NOW, as He has always been, and always will be; He is certainly the very "alpha" and "omega." For those who still wish to wait for His coming, they are free to wait in their ignorance, as the majority always have. The scriptures continuously implore us to put aside all our clever philosophies,

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imaginings, beliefs, and dogmas, and simply turn to the current *living* Master:

"Let no one deceive himself. If anyone thinks that he is wise – in the ordinary (non-Spiritual) sense of the word – then he must become a fool (in the eyes of materialistic men) in order for him to gain true Wisdom. For the wisdom of this (material) world is foolishness to God." (1stCOR.3:18-19).

"[Spiritual] ignorance is the mother of all evil. Ignorance will eventuate in death, because those who come from ignorance neither were, nor are, nor shall be. But those who love Truth will be perfect when all Truth is revealed... If we Know the Truth, we will find its fruits within us. If we are joined to it, it will bring our fulfilment." (Coptic – Gospel of Philip, pp.83:30 – 84:13).

There is no evil in existence that did not originate within the mind of man. The concept of the Devil being a man-like creature with various animal-like characteristics (e.g. horns, claws or cloven hooves, tail, etc.) is actually quite an accurate caricature of our own "first-born" (initial) "animalistic" (carnal / beastly / unspiritual / sinful) nature. Thus all the uninitiated, who rely solely on their "first-born" mental abilities to determine their actions (including accepted religious beliefs and dogmas determined by similar unspiritual mental capabilities of others), however honourable their intentions, are simply part and parcel of the whole system of evil. To put it simply, the unenlightened mind is the one and only Devil or Satan (our greatest enemy).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ The uninitiated have no true understanding of the great power of the mind, and how it is controlling us. From the day we are born, our mind is in complete control – it is our master, never satisfied, always wondering, and leading us in many directions. There is a war going on within us, between our good (Spiritual) Self (referred to as: our *Heart*) and our evil,

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"When the evil (i.e. unspiritual or materialistic) **man curses Satan, he is cursing himself!"** (ECCLESIASTICUS 21:27).

"Sin has not been sent upon the Earth, but man of himself has created it!" (1stENOCH 98:4).

"It is from within, out of the mind of man that all evil emerges." (MARK 7:21-23; cf. JER.17:9).

Without Spiritual Knowledge, humankind cannot actually know what is genuinely true and righteous, let alone lead a just and proper life on Earth. In many cases, even the most dedicated religionists cannot correctly comprehend the most elementary principles of Righteousness and Truth.⁹⁹ In order to prove this point we will now look at a typical example of widespread orthodox ignorance and error. According to the Bible, in the beginning, before the "fall" of mankind into error and sin, God said: "*I have given you (mankind) every seed bearing plant upon the Earth, and every vegetable substance which bears fruit and yields seed: this shall be your food.*" (GEN.1:29). PEAKE'S COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE states of this verse: "*Men and animals are regarded as living on a vegetarian diet in the period before the flood. There would thus be peace between men and animals, and in the animal world itself... It had not been God's original intention that food should be obtained by slaughter.*"

selfish, materialistic self (our mind). The mind is extremely cunning, and very capable of fooling us into believing that we are doing the right thing – even when we are not. It can indeed behave like an 'angel of light.' "*For Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*" (2ndCOR.11:14). Genuine Spiritual Masters provide a special tool, which enables us to truly understand such things and to control our *bad* self (mind), thus allowing our *good* Self (Heart) to take control. It has been said that **the mind is a very useful servant, but a very bad master!** This is very true.

⁹⁹ See e.g. the previous explanation of the original and 'genuine' Law of Sacrifice, above p.12.

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However, a later passage in *GENESIS* has been interpreted by various orthodox authorities as permitting the use of animal flesh for food. The passage in question has been translated into English to read: "***Every moving*** (or 'creeping') ***thing*** (Heb. *remes*) ***that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herbs have I (God) given you everything. But flesh which contains conscious life (or 'soul'), that is, anything containing blood, you shall not eat.***" (GEN.9:3-4). Mainstream Jews have always interpreted this passage to mean that God had somehow 'changed His mind,' now allowing animal flesh to be eaten, provided that all the blood was first drained out.¹⁰⁰ However, there is one crucial word contained in the Hebrew original of this passage, which has been incorrectly understood. It is the very word that defines that which is allowed as our food – the Hebrew term *remes*. It is agreed that this word signifies: "*that which 'creeps' ('moves slowly' or 'spreads out') over ground or in water.*" Orthodoxy is undecided as to what the term really means. It has been translated variously as "reptiles", "insects," "swarming things," "creatures that move," "creeping things," "sea creatures," and generally as "*any creature*" *whatsoever*. This definition of "creeping" or "spreading out slowly" over the land or in water, however, clearly does not apply to many animals – especially not to those which are commonly slaughtered for food, e.g. cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, etc.¹⁰¹ In fact

¹⁰⁰ It must be understood that God is Perfect in every respect, and therefore everything He thinks, says, commands, or does must be eternally and universally PERFECT. If there is any need, at any time, for any change to any of God's pronouncements, then they cannot have been Perfect. To suggest that God would somehow change His mind – for whatever reason – is to belittle Him and His Divine Intelligence. Is God not said to be Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent? Rather, as we will see, it was the evil mind of man that changed and corrupted God's commands.

¹⁰¹ The Hebrew term for all "living things" (in general) is *hayah*; and the term for quadrupeds (i.e. all four legged animals) is *behemah*. Neither of these terms is used in this passage that defines what humans may eat.

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the definition of "remes" more accurately describes 'vegetation' (i.e. 'plants' or 'creepers') in general; nothing else fits the definition of having a "*slow 'creeping' movement*"— unless God intended us to eat worms, slugs, snails, and various other 'creepy-crawlies'¹⁰²! If we now look at a revised translation of this passage which we have been considering, it should become clear that God did not '*change His mind*',¹⁰³ and that His original decree (i.e. that we should eat only vegetable substances) is consistent, correct, and perfect (as anything which God decrees must surely be!): ***"All living plants are for your food: just as the green herbs, I (God) have given them all to you. But flesh, which has soul – i.e. anything containing blood – you must not eat."*** It should also be noted that the restriction of not eating anything containing blood does NOT mean that if the blood is drained out of an animal the flesh may then be eaten, as the carnal¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² "All the insects that swarm upon the Earth are unclean, and shall not be eaten. Whether they slither on their belly's, or walk on four legs, or many legs, all the multitude of insects are unclean and must not be eaten." (LEV.11:41-42).

¹⁰³ How could God's Truth, and His commands ever be in error, and necessitate revision over any issue? Such an absurd idea degrades the very essence of God and His all-knowing Perfection. See e.g. NUM.23:19.

¹⁰⁴ The word *carnal* (from the Latin *carnis* = flesh) is frequently used in the New Testament to signify that which is opposed to the Spirit. What could signify a more unspiritual lifestyle than killing and consuming the flesh of innocent animals? The late Dr. Robert Runcie (Archbishop of Canterbury) said on this subject: "*In the Christian ascetic tradition, as in many eastern religions, vegetarianism is regarded as a way of achieving a heightened consciousness and receptivity of the spiritual world.*" Indeed, if this is so, why then, one must ask, do the ministers of the so-called Christian churches not teach this to their congregations? Moreover, why are those ministers themselves not all vegetarians? Is it not their aim to achieve a heightened consciousness and receptivity of the spiritual world? Could it be that they are frightened of upsetting and/or losing more of their carnal and worldly congregations? Or is it because of an overwhelming sensual desire or blood lust? Some suggestions are given in their own scriptures: see e.g. ISAIAH 22:13 & 66:3; EZEK.22:26; & MAL.2:7-8.

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(i.e. "flesh" loving) priesthoods of orthodoxy have inferred.¹⁰⁵ When God said that we must not eat anything which contains blood, He simply meant that we must not eat any kind of animal – all of which contain blood! To simply drain the blood out of an animal in order to get around the law is typical of what the evil (ignorant) minds of orthodoxy have so often done – rather like a lawyer looking for "loopholes" in the law. For further confirmation of these facts, let us now look at a few more passages from ancient scripture:

"Thou shalt not kill." (EXOD.20:13).

"This is an eternal ordinance for all generations, wherever you live: You must not eat any flesh or any blood." (LEV.3:17).

"If any Israelite or other person eats blood, I (the Lord) will turn Myself against him and cut him off from among My people." (LEV.17:10).

It is practically impossible to remove every particle of blood from the flesh of any animal. Thus, it should be obvious that in eating animal flesh one cannot avoid eating blood – however little it might be! Quite simply, God clearly forbids the eating of anything containing blood. All animals contain blood. Thus, we must not eat

¹⁰⁵ See e.g. LEV.17:13. Fabre d'Olivet, an 18th Century Mystic and scholar of the ancient Hebrew language, states of the traditional translation and interpretation of GEN.9:3: "*I regret the trouble that the Hellenists have taken to disguise the force of this verse (GEN.9:3) and the ensuing ones... the discreet complaisance of the Latin translator, who has chosen to pass in silence the words which have perplexed him; but at last it is necessary that Moses be translated... Long enough have these magnificent tableaux been degraded by the sorry caricatures which have been made of them. They must be known in their original conception... In fact, this is beyond doubt: Moses, by the mouth of the Divinity, forbids the posterity of Noah to feed upon corporeal substances, the similitude of that which his soul bears in himself.*" (Fabre d'Olivet, *The Hebraic Tongue Restored*).

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animals! This is really very simple, yet it is rejected by the carnal mind.

"While the flesh was still between their (the Israelites in the desert who lusted for flesh to eat) **teeth, not even chewed, the anger of the Lord broke out against them, and He struck them with a deadly plague. That place was thus called 'The Graves of Lust'** (Heb. Kibroth-hattaavah), **for there they buried those who had lusted [for flesh].**" (NUM.11:33-34).

"Keep away from winebibbers and those who gorge on flesh." (PROV.23:20).

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall live together... The lion shall eat straw like the ox... they shall not hurt or destroy in all My Holy Mountain." (ISAIAH 11:6-9 & 65:25).

"Behold their joy and pleasure: killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine... These sins will not be cleansed until you die, says the Lord." (ISAIAH 22:13-14).

"He that kills an ox is as he that murders a man; he that sacrifices a lamb is as he that breaks a dog's neck... Yes, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations... They do that which is evil, and choose that which displeases Me (God)." (ISAIAH 66:3-4).

"You eat blood, you worship idols (i.e. material things), **you shed blood: so do you expect to inherit the land?"** (EZEK.33:25).

"Daniel was determined not to defile himself with the

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flesh and wine offered to him... give us only vegetables to eat and water to drink." (DAN.1:8-16).

"I (Daniel) ate no rich food, and no flesh or wine entered into my mouth." (DAN.10:3).

"They (those who reject the Lord) sacrifice and eat flesh against the will of the Lord, so He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins." (HOSEA 8:13).

"The violence done in Lebanon will overcome you; the slaughter of animals will cause you much sorrow." (HAB.2:17).

"I (the Lord) will take the blood from his mouth and the abominations from between his teeth." (ZECH.9:7).

"Eat only the fruits of the field, and taste no flesh or wine, but eat only the fruit." (2ndESDRAS or 4thEZRA 9:24).

"They (carnal people) began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish: they devoured their flesh and drank their blood." (1stENOCH 7:5).

"Woe to you, you obstinate of heart, who do evil and devour blood, even though you have good things to eat and drink and be satisfied." (1stENOCH 98:11).

"I (Reuben) repented before the Lord: I drank no wine or liquor, and no flesh entered my mouth." (Testament of REUBEN 1:10).

"Since I (Judah) repented of these sins I consumed neither wine nor flesh." (Testament of JUDAH 15:4).

"When we desire to eat seafood or poultry or four-

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legged animals or any food which is forbidden by the Law, we abstain through our mastery of reason." (4th MACCABEES 1:34).

"No man shall defile himself by eating any living creature." (Dead Sea Scrolls: 'Damascus Rule' 14:12).

"They (the disciples of Isaiah) all dressed in garments made of wool, and they were all Prophets... and they ate nothing but wild herbs... and they lived thereon together with Isaiah the Prophet." (Martyrdom of Isaiah 2:10-11).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine." (ROM.14:21).

"I (Paul) will never eat flesh again." (1stCOR.8:13).

The two previous quotations are taken from rather confused passages in Paul's letters. It is possible that these passages have been corrupted by a 'carnal' scribe of orthodoxy. As they now stand, they imply that Paul recommended abstention from flesh merely to appease certain Christians who were vegetarian. However, such a position would be inconsistent with Paul's uncompromising attitude to what he believed to be the Truth. For instance, his attitude to the Jewish law of circumcision was by no means one of appeasement. He refused to give in to certain Hebrew-Christian 'legalists'/ 'literalists' who demanded adherence to the Biblical law of circumcision. Thus he refused to demand (or even recommend) circumcision for Gentile converts to Christianity. Is it, then, likely that Paul would recommend vegetarianism for any reason other than what he believed to be the Truth? – nay, not merely recommend, but actually say that he, himself, would NEVER AGAIN EAT ANY FLESH! However, there are grave reasons why we should not put our trust in anything which Paul says – for

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reasons, see Appendix 7, p.195.

"Lord, come and grant [Spiritual] Life and Breath and secure footing to these creatures (i.e. the Spiritually ignorant), **that they may forsake their beastly natures and become tame, and no longer eat flesh... that humane hearts be given them... that they may eat what we eat."** (Acts of Philip 99).

"For their (evil ones) food is everything which is dead, and every unclean thing. For when these are within you, what living thing will come into you? The living angels will detest you. You were a temple, (but) you have made yourself a tomb. Cease being a tomb, and become (again) a temple, so that uprightness and divinity may remain in you." (Coptic – Teaching of Silvanus).

"The Almighty God rained manna upon them, suited to their various tastes; and they enjoyed all that they would. But they, because of their bastard nature, not being pleased with pure food, longed only after the taste of blood. Wherefore they first tasted flesh." (Clementine Homilies 8:15).

Clement of Alexandria (2nd Century Bishop of Alexandria) also recommended a fleshless diet, citing the example of the Apostle Matthew, who, he says: **"partook of seeds, nuts, and vegetables, but no flesh."** (Paedagogus 2:1).

"James, the Lord's brother, was holy from birth: he drank no wine or intoxicating liquor, and ate no animal flesh." (Hegesippus – 2nd century Jewish Christian) – quoted by Eusebius CHURCH HISTORY 2, 23:4).

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There were also various "unorthodox" Mystic sects among first-century Jews (e.g. the Essenes) who were strict vegetarians. It is interesting to note that the Essenes were the only large Jewish sect that was not, according to the New Testament, condemned or criticised by Jesus. Furthermore, in addition to the above evidence that SS. Matthew and James were vegetarians, it is also reported by Epiphanius that St. John ate no animal flesh. It is also a fact that many other early Jewish disciples of Jesus – those who rejected worldly greed and private ownership of goods, choosing instead a simple, poor, 'communistic' life-style (see ACTS 2:44-45, & 4:32-37), and thus accruing the labels "Ebionites" / "Nazarites"¹⁰⁶ – are known to have been vegetarians.¹⁰⁷ It is not difficult to see why the later self-styled "orthodox" gentile hierarchies, which were becoming powerful and wealthy, rejected the simple communistic Ebionites as heretics!¹⁰⁸ It is also relevant to note that, according to Epiphanius, the Ebionites possessed a Hebrew (or Aramaic¹⁰⁹) "Gospel of Matthew"

¹⁰⁶ The term *Ebionite* comes from the Hebrew: 'ebion (= poor, poverty). *Nazarite* (more correctly *Nazirite*) comes from the Hebrew *nazir* (= consecrated, separated) i.e. a type of ascetic who is dedicated to God, see e.g. JUDGES 13:5-7; compare with: "So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: *He shall be called a Nazarene* (i.e. Nazirite)." (MATT.2:23). Thus, *Nazarene* is probably an inaccurate Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *nazirim*, and has no connection with the town of Nazareth (there are 6 different (erroneous) Greek versions of this term in the NT). Among those historically important contemporaries of Jesus who are reported to have taken the Nazirite vow are John *the Baptist*, St. James (Jesus' brother), St. John, and, on a temporary basis, St. Paul (see e.g. LUKE 1:15; cf. NUM.6:2-3; ACTS 18:18 & 21:23-24). It is also worth noting that the disciples of John the Baptist (the Mandaeans) have a priestly caste called Nasoreans (Heb. = 'watchers,' 'keepers,' or 'protectors' – of Truth); see above, page 66 note 56.

¹⁰⁷ For more information about the Ebionites, see article in *THE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY*.

¹⁰⁸ See Paul Johnson, *A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY*, Pelican paperback ed. pp.42-43 & 90-91.

¹⁰⁹ Aramaic was the language used by Jesus and his original Jewish disciples, and would thus be the obvious language for all original records of his teachings and deeds.

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(possibly the original "autographa" – no longer extant) which stated that John the Baptist ate "*bread and wild honey*" instead of the "*locusts and wild honey*" which our extant Greek manuscripts record (see MATT.3:4). There is an ancient Greek word for "bread" (*eјnkriv* = encris) which is very similar to that for "locust" (*aјkriv* = akris), thus it is quite probable that a very early copyist of a Greek translation of the text misread and/or miscopied the word in question. It must also be noted that the Mandaeans – the reputed followers of this John (the Baptist) – were also originally strict vegetarians.

Eusebius (263-339 AD), who wrote the earliest extant history of Christianity, adds to the evidence supporting vegetarianism in a passage from a letter he preserved from some very early Christians in Gaul. There had apparently been accusations that Christians were killing and eating the flesh of children. The argument given against this charge was: "*How could children be eaten by people (i.e. Christians) who are not even allowed to eat the blood of brute beasts?*" (Eusebius, *HISTORY OF THE CHURCH*, book 5, 1:26).

Finally, it should be noted that Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, taught that vegetarianism was an ideal of *pure* religion, and that in the Messianic age *all genuine* followers of the Messiah will be vegetarian!

Such is the documentary evidence of Judaism and Christianity for this case; but the true evidence and real proof lies deep within the soul, far from any intellectual reasoning and argument. Unfortunately, no amount of any kind of reasoning or proof will be sufficient for stubborn, carnal, materialists. An argument that is often put forward by such Spiritually ignorant people is that as vegetables also contain life, there is, therefore, no difference between

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eating vegetables or animals. There are various answers to such arguments – both religious and rational. Firstly, the scriptures tell us not to eat anything that contains blood, i.e. all animals and fish. Vegetables contain a much lower life form; there is no comparison between the consciousness of an animal (which has a brain, heart, eyes, etc.) and a vegetable. However, it must be admitted that fruits, nuts, and pulses are the best forms of food, as eating them requires no taking of life whatsoever. All fruit trees give freely of their fruit with no harm being done, and if the fruit is eaten, the seeds may still be planted to continue the life cycle. In fact, many such plants rely on animals etc. eating their fruit in order to distribute the seeds, in their dung, over an extended area, just as some plants rely on the wind or insects. Lastly, eating flesh is clearly detrimental to our physical and Spiritual health – as is drinking alcohol.

Of course, merely being vegetarian does not mean that one is in any way Spiritual (Hitler was a vegetarian!); but not being vegetarian definitely proves that one is carnal, let alone totally inhumane! No genuinely Spiritual person could ever contemplate hurting or murdering animals. Those who enjoy bull-fights, cock-fights, fox hunting, badger baiting, dog fights, game shooting, and similar blood-sports are the very lowest form of humanity – nay, they should not even be called human, for they are, in truth, no better than brute beasts themselves. As it states in the (Coptic) 'Gospel of Philip': "***There are many animals in the world which are in human form.***"

From this overwhelming abundance of evidence, it should now be clear to any open minded reader that the orthodox principles and teachings concerning the killing of animals and eating of flesh are somewhat at odds with the Spiritual

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Truth of God.¹¹⁰ This is just one example of the many great errors of orthodoxy. Another example is the common interpretation of the 3rd Commandment of God: "*Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord in vain.*" This has nothing to do with 'blaspheming', as the Divine Name of God cannot be spoken. The true (Spiritual) Name, as we have seen,¹¹¹ is that Creative and Sustaining 'Essence' of all life – the very Breath (= Spirit) of God. Note that the command states that we must not "take" the Name in vain (i.e. take without value). The Divine Name or Word (i.e. the '*Primordial Vibration*') resonates in each and every breath of air that we *take* (approx. 12,000 times every day). Not to be fully aware of (i.e. actually PERCEIVE, and thus genuinely esteem, value, and REALISE) this Spiritual and LIFE-GIVING Essence of God vibrating within each and every breath – this is indeed to 'take' the Name in vain!!! (Cf. JOB 32:8).

To conclude this chapter on ignorance and evil there follows a few more relevant passages from ancient scripture:

"How long, you [Spiritually] ignorant people, will you love ignorance? and scorners delight in their

¹¹⁰ There is a passage in the New Testament that completely contradicts all that we have elsewhere observed about eating flesh (i.e. anything containing blood). This passage (*1stTIM.4:1-3*) states that 'evil spirits' will forbid the eating of some foods (e.g. animal flesh) which **God has created to be received with gratitude**, and that **everything** which God has created is good, and **suitable for our consumption**, so long as we receive it with proper thanks?! Such a statement is obviously erroneous and contradicts many previous biblical statements where God forbids many things. Are we to understand from this passage that such things as tobacco, marijuana and cocaine (which were presumably created by God) are good for us??? However, it is now agreed by reputable New Testament scholars that this letter (*1stTIMOTHY*) is a late and pseudonymous work. It was obviously written by someone who wished to appease certain worldly and carnal desires of the masses, and certainly contradicts what God sanctioned in GEN.1:29.

¹¹¹ See above, p.79 ff.

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"scorning? and fools hate [Divine] Knowledge (i.e. Gnosis)??" (PROV.1:22).

"He who trusts in his own heart (i.e. mind) is a fool, but he who Knows [Divine] Wisdom will be saved." (PROV.28:26).

"Your iniquities have separated you (the majority) from God; your sins have hidden His Face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things." (ISAIAH 59:2-3).

"They have not listened to My (Yahweh's) Voice, but have followed the dictates of their own stubborn hearts." (JER.9:13-14).

"They (the false teachers of religion) say to those who deny the [living] Lord: 'You shall have peace'; and to those who follow their own stubborn hearts, they say: 'No evil will come to you.' But which of them has been present at the council of the Lord? Which of them has SEEN Him and HEARD His Word?" (JER.23:17-18).

"It is all you so-called priests that I (Yahweh) denounce. Day and night you stumble on, the false prophets stumbling with you. You are the ruin of the people, who perish for lack of [Spiritual] KNOWLEDGE. You have rejected Knowledge, so I reject you from My priesthood. You have forgotten the Divine Law of God, so I, also, will forget your followers." (HOSEA 4:4-6)

"And now, you priests, these words are for you: If you will not listen to me (the living Lord) and open your

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minds to honour My Name, then I will curse your very blessings; indeed I have already cursed them because none of you pay heed to Me... You have all strayed from the Way, and caused many to stumble by your teaching." (MAL.2:1-8).

"Their wickedness has blinded them. They do not know the Mysteries of God, thus they have no hope of the fruits of Holiness." (WISDOM 2:21-22).

"There are those outside of us (initiates) who call themselves bishops or deacons, as if they had received their authority from God. They bend themselves to the judgements of worldly leaders. These people are dry canals." (Coptic – Apocalypse of Peter, p.79:23-31).

"There shall be many who believe in My name and yet follow after evil and spread vain doctrine. And many will follow after them and their riches, and be subject unto their pride, and lust for drink, and bribery, and there shall be respect of persons among them. But they who desire to behold the Face of God, who respect not the persons of the rich sinners, and are not afraid to rebuke those who lead astray, they shall be crowned by the Father, for they are the sons of Wisdom and Faith." (Epistle of the Apostles 37-38).

"There shall come forth another doctrine, and much confusion; and those who strive after their own [material] advancement shall bring forth an [Spiritually] unprofitable doctrine. And therein shall be a deadly corruption, and they shall teach it, and turn away from My [Spiritual] Law many who believe in Me (the living Lord), and thus cut them off from Eternal Life." (Epistle of the Apostles 50).

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By observing the general state of the world, it should be abundantly clear that something is drastically wrong with humanity. Since the beginning of recorded history these problems have existed, but now, with the emergence of new-age technology, the problems are escalating and magnified.¹¹² It is very easy to lay the blame on others – but where does the blame truly lie?

From this study it should now be clear that God *always* has a Personal Representative (man-god) living on Earth. This is the way He has always chosen to communicate with us – and **what better way?**¹¹³ In fact, if God does not treat *every* generation in the same way: by giving *everyone* the *same* opportunity, and the same test, as He gave to those living at the time of Jesus (and all other Masters/ Prophets) – that is the opportunity and test of RECOGNITION and ACCEPTANCE of the LIVING LORD¹¹⁴ – then how can He be considered impartial and righteous? Actually, such an opportunity and test is very necessary to demonstrate the genuineness and sincerity of people who merely say they believe in an *historic*

¹¹² With the innovation of radio, satellite television, and the internet, information and propaganda (both good and bad) is freely available everywhere. Religions now have their own cable TV channels to propagate their bigotry worldwide and collect huge donations. Individuals or organisations with crazy and/or fanatical ideas can now display their beliefs on the worldwide web. Indeed, only the gullible will be influenced – but there seems to be no shortage of such people.

¹¹³ See NUM.27:16-23, where God appoints Joshua to be successor to Moses as the Divine Shepherd. “Jesus said: ‘If I do not come in the flesh, I could not reveal the Mysteries to you.’” (Gospel of Bartholomew 1:2). It should be quite obvious that mere written words (i.e. scriptures) cannot reveal the Spirit of Truth. If they could, then why did Jesus himself not spend some time writing the perfect text for all future generations? Simply because He knew better! He knew there would be a continuous line of Divine Masters to take His place in revealing the Mysteries of God.

¹¹⁴ “The trial which comes to the whole world, to test all who dwell on the Earth. I (the Lord) come (again) immediately, so hold fast to that which you have, that no one takes your crown.” (REV.3:10-11).

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Messiah and His (*imminent? / future?*) return to Earth. Only sincere and genuine SEEKERS will ever recognise His presence: indeed, the living Master reveals Himself only to those who are genuinely seeking for Truth – the Truth which is the only effective solution to all our *real* problems. Those who are satisfied, and think that they already know the truth from a book, such as the Bible, will never find Him (God, or the Teacher). This was the mistake of the vast majority of religious people (e.g. the Sadducees and Pharisees) of Jesus' time. They already had an historic master: *Moses*; and a reference book: *the Bible* – this was good enough for them. Thus, they rejected and even murdered Jesus, as their predecessors had done to so many previous Masters/Prophets. The world is still dominated by these *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, only now they are known by different names, and follow various other deceased, historic Masters. God's Representative is not, and never has been, widely recognised or accepted *during* each of His various incarnations.¹¹⁵ To find, accept, and follow the current *living* Master is, perhaps, the hardest test of all. How many Christians have asked themselves whether they would have recognised Jesus as the Messiah if they had met Him during His lifetime on Earth? With hindsight, things seem very simple; but Jesus was actually rejected by the vast majority of people who met Him! However, to recognise and follow the *living* Master is the **only way** of attaining the ultimate goal of Life, as is attested to in the scriptures of all the world's religions.

¹¹⁵ See KING JAMES VERSION of MATT.20:16 "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" Also, in ACTS 1:15 it is recorded that the number of Jesus' disciples, just after His death, amounted to about 120. It is not clear whether this is the *total* number, or just the number who had assembled in Jerusalem at this critical and momentous time. Even if it refers to only those gathered in Jerusalem, it is a remarkably small number considering the importance of the occasion, and the reports of His three years of teaching to crowds of up to 5,000 or 6,000 at a time!

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It is not difficult to understand that to follow a deceased (*historic*) Master is far more convenient, advantageous, and profitable for spiritual *pretenders* and those worldly, immature, and lacklustre *believers*. For such people, mere *belief* in God, obtained from a *silent book*, is preferable to hearing and KNOWING the Truth from a *living* Master, who might censure their worldly desires and errors (as the living Jesus certainly did). Merely relying on a book also allows the freedom of interpretation – to construe it to suit one's own tastes and desires, as is evidenced by the ever-growing number of factions and choices (*heresies*) in all religions. In addition, by merely relying on a book, one can select exactly what one wishes to read, and, by ignoring the remainder, can perhaps hope to plead ignorance of other things at a possible Judgement Day! However, just as in the laws of humanity, ignorance is no excuse before God.

By now, if one has absorbed the genuine facts, it should be simple to comprehend how the 'apostle' Paul managed to do so much better at accumulating disciples than Jesus.¹¹⁶ Paul (who had been a staunch and zealous Pharisee) was merely formulating and teaching yet another *snug* or *smug worldly religion* (dogma), rather than *revealing* the experience of Truth – something only a genuine "man-god" can do. In fact there is strong evidence that the *original* Apostles (those whom Jesus personally appointed *during his lifetime*), as well as many contemporary Jewish disciples of Jesus, rejected Paul as a false teacher. The book of ACTS (which was written by a disciple of Paul) and Paul's own letters contain the only known accounts of a heated dispute between Paul and the

¹¹⁶ During Paul's various missionary journeys through modern day Syria, Cyprus, Turkey and Greece, he established more than 20 churches, and raised enough money to support himself and his companions, and also help support the Jerusalem community. He was probably the first to raise large amounts of money by using the name of Jesus!

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original Apostles (the leaders of the Jerusalem community). Unfortunately, these accounts portray only Paul's side of the dispute, and should be read with great caution (see ACTS 15:1-21 & 21:17ff; & GAL.2:2-16).¹¹⁷ Paul apparently believed that Jesus came, not to fulfil the Eternal Law of God (cf. MATT.5:17-20), but to end it, giving Christians freedom from its burden (yoke).¹¹⁸ All that Paul's '*Christians*' needed to do was to *believe* in Jesus as their Saviour – especially in His death being a *blood sacrifice for their sins!* However, the Ebionites (Hebrew: ebyōn, "poor ones"), the contemporary Jewish Disciples of Jesus who "*held all things in common*" (ACTS 2:44-47 – thus the title: *poor ones*) are reported by Irenaeus¹¹⁹ to have differed from '*orthodox*' (i.e. 'Paulist')

¹¹⁷ From these *Pauline* accounts, it is inferred that a compromise was reached between the opposing sides. However, with Spiritual Truth, there is no room for compromise – THE TRUTH IS THE TRUTH! This was not some sort of political argument where compromise is the norm! The Christian religion however, as all religions, is composed of many such compromises. God, however, does not compromise – for His way is Perfect and Just and Fair and Right and Eternal!

¹¹⁸ See e.g. GAL.3:10 & 5:1; ROM.3:21 & 10:4; EPH.2:15; & COL.2:13-14; compare with MATT.5:17-20. For example, Christianity (which has developed from Paul's *Gentile* teachings) is the only major religion which has no food restrictions whatsoever. All others recognize strict dietary regulations – although mostly in a somewhat corrupted or ignorant manner, or for the wrong (unspiritual) reasons. Jews and Muslims are forbidden to eat pigs and a variety of other animals, and have strict Kosher/Halal laws; whilst devoted Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains are restricted from killing and eating all animals. There are many other genuine Spiritual Laws which have been abolished or ignored by Christianity. The Hebrew Scriptures are even called the *OLD* Testament – as if they are no longer relevant. However, God's True Spiritual Law is perpetual and unchanging, and any genuine testament to it will always be the same – not '*old*' or '*new*'.

¹¹⁹ Irenaeus was a 2nd-century '*orthodox*' (or "*Paulist*") Christian Bishop – one of the so-called "fathers" and "saints" of the emergent Roman Church, and a fanatical detester of anyone claiming to be Gnostic. His book: *Against the Heresies*, is directed at all who claimed to have Mystical 'first-hand' KNOWLEDGE (Gnosis) of God. His beliefs were prominent in the choice of books allowed to be included in the New Testament. Out of more than 30 early Christian gospels, he chose only

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Christians in considering Paul an apostate for having declared the supremacy of (his version of) *Christian* teaching over the (Eternal/Spiritual) Law of God.¹²⁰ In fact, most of what is now accepted as *orthodox Christian* doctrine was developed from Paul's teaching, rather than from that of Jesus. The New Testament Gospels concentrate on the story of Jesus' life – his birth, baptism, day to day travels, miracles, death, etc. – but really tell us very little of His teachings, apart from a few short sermons, parables, conversations and arguments. Paul's letters, however, are packed full of *his* own personal beliefs – *his* ideology, *his* philosophy, and *his* theology. The theory that Jesus' crucifixion and death was a necessary blood sacrifice,¹²¹ and even the name "*Christian*" (ACTS 11:26), were probably his innovations. It would thus be more accurate to call this developed theology, not Christianity, but **Paulism!** It should be noted that many things that Paul wrote are undeniably true – indeed several such quotations from his letters have been used in this study – but much else is, regrettably, spurious.¹²²

Of course, a genuine Master will never eradicate the *Eternal Law of God*, but will reveal its true, deep, Spiritual

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – saying that, just as the Earth had four corners and four winds, so should there be only four gospels. He thus discarded or condemned all others, especially those which spoke of a secret Gnosis.

¹²⁰ It is interesting and informative to note that the Ebionites also followed a vegetarian diet – a practice which they probably learned from their *living Master*: Jesus! They also rejected the myth of His "virgin" birth, as did the author of the earliest Gospel: Mark. John's Gospel also fails to mention it, as did the earliest 'orthodox' Christian writer of all: Paul!

¹²¹ See 1stCOR.5:7; ROM.3:25; 5:8-9; 9:26-28 & 10:10; & EPH.5:2 & 9:28.

¹²² "For Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." (2ndCOR.11:14). There are so many strange things about Paul's character and his teachings that it would require another detailed study to define fully. For a brief summary, see below, APPENDIX 7, p.195.

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meanings¹²³ – which are never understood in the realms of the worldly, or by the teachers and followers of materialistic religions. To explain things simply, in the beginning God revealed His Divine, Spiritual, and Eternal Law to man through a human Messenger (= Angel). This Law encompasses everything, and resides, hidden, deep within the souls of all humankind. This Spiritual Law was eventually secularized, corrupted, and written down by spiritually ignorant scribes in various books, e.g. the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible).¹²⁴ However, as previously explained, God continually sends His Messengers to reveal His True Spiritual Law. This Law of God never changes or ends – for it is Perfect and Eternal. Nevertheless, Paul believed and taught that Jesus came to end the Law. This was the root of the dispute between him and the true Apostles, who presumably understood the Truth from their personal contact with Jesus.¹²⁵ Another false belief of Paul's was that Jesus came to die

¹²³ E.g. For the true (Spiritual) meaning of the "Law of Sacrifice," see above p.12; and for the command: "*Do not take the Lord's Name in vain,*" see above pp.140 and 79ff.

¹²⁴ One simple example of how the True Law was corrupted: God's Law is centred on Love, Peace, gentleness, kindness, and compassion to *all* living creatures. Much more, in fact, than the *written* commandments about "loving your neighbour" or "not killing"! In the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible we are told that God commanded humankind to be vegetarian (i.e. no killing/shedding of blood) – a true and *eternal* Law. However, sometime later the Bible dictates a new food policy of "clean and unclean" animals – allowing *some* animals to be killed and eaten – clearly invented by a corrupt and carnal (flesh lustng) priesthood. Then Paul comes along, clearly recognising that something is wrong with the written law - but instead of correcting it, in his ignorance he makes things even worse – he tells Christians that they are now free from the law, and can kill and eat whatever they wish (but only if, by doing so, they upset no one else)!

¹²⁵ The original Apostles were apparently hand picked by Jesus Himself to assist in His work. They had also been very close to Him for a number of years – since the very beginning of His mission. Paul, on the other hand, is a self-proclaimed apostle – we only have *his* word for this assertion. He never even met Jesus. Whom, then, should we side with in any dispute – Jesus' known Apostles, or Paul?

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for our sins. The purpose of any Master is to live and teach – his *purpose* is not to die!¹²⁶ It is reported that Jesus said: "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world" (JOHN 9:5) and "No one comes to the Father except through me" (JOHN 14:6). These are indeed true statements. Nevertheless, one must remember that these words were spoken by Jesus while he was still living in the world, and to people who were His *living* contemporaries. If these words are understood correctly, that is, if they are understood to refer to the Messiah who is currently (and always) living *in the world*, then they are indeed perpetually true. We must not get confused with the *historic* Messiah Jesus, who lived in the world some 2,000 years ago, and the Eternal Succession of Messianic Kings who reign (unknown by most) on Earth forever. It is, and has always been essential to have a living Master to reveal the Truth – these Masters have often been persecuted and killed by the worldly – but their deaths are not, and have never been the reason for their coming! It is always the orthodox religionists that have persecuted and murdered these genuine Teachers – obviously because they feel threatened by the Truth. However, these genuine Masters do not rant and rave about God, like so many TV and radio evangelists, but quietly reveal the personal and intimate EXPERIENCE of God to those who are sincerely seeking. The current Master recently said, when asked to explain what He means when using the terms "God" and "Divine": "***Just that!... I am not going to get into defining the indefinable, trying to explain the unexplainable. Too much of the world is already busy doing that, and in their grinding stones of explanations – about that which needs to be felt – a lot of people are getting ground, and somehow it is all***

¹²⁶ It is reported that Jesus Himself said: "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world: **to testify to the Truth.** Everyone on the side of Truth listens to me." (JOHN 18:37).

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legitimised! So when I use those two words I mean exactly what I mean – what I feel. Just that!" It is clear from this that to try to define God in words (as all religions do) is impossible – a futile task. The only way to understand God is to **experience** and **feel** (not emotionally – but in actuality¹²⁷) His presence within through the Grace and Knowledge of the living Master.

The loud mouthed, arrogant, and spiritually ignorant preachers of religion¹²⁸ are actually causing most of the confusion and hatred in the world, as they always have. Whether they are so-called Christians or Jews, Muslims or Sikhs, it does not matter – they all lead their followers astray; "*Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.*" (MATT. 15:14). "*It is all you so-called priests that I (Yahweh) denounce. Day and night you stumble on, the false prophets stumbling with you. You are the ruin of the people, who perish for lack of [Spiritual] KNOWLEDGE. You have rejected Knowledge, so I reject you from My priesthood. You have forgotten the Divine Law of God, so I, also, will forget your followers.*" (HOSEA 4:4-6). In fact, all religions are actually satanic by their very nature. They love this material world, which is the domain of satan, for they know no other. They always reject the contemporary Master sent by God, relying instead on ancient books and blind beliefs, and rebuff the possibility of obtaining personal empirical Knowledge of God in *this* lifetime. This is what Jesus is reported to have said about these teachers of religion (taken from the 23rd chapter of MATTHEW): "*Everything they do is done for men to see... they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues (churches / temples / mosques)... they*

¹²⁷ For details of these REAL experiences of God (i.e. NAME, LIGHT, SOUND, FOOD) see above, pp.79ff; 89ff; 96ff; & 103ff.

¹²⁸ "*He (God's chosen Servant) will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.*" (ISAIAH 42:2).

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love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Master'... but do not call anyone on Earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in Heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the (living) Messiah... Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You close the Kingdom of Heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to... Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are... You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel... Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. You say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets... You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you Prophets and Wise men and Teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues (places of worship) and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on Earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiyah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar... For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.' (MATT. Chapter 23). These words of Jesus are scathingly

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critical and show deep anger towards the religious teachers of His day. It must be understood that many of these men were completely sincere in their beliefs and teachings, just as the religious teachers of today, but they were Spiritually blind men, and were in fact teaching falsehood. Note, also, in this passage, the clear statement that God, Himself, will send a succession of Prophets, Wise men, and Teachers (i.e. Spiritual Masters). But from the concluding words it is also quite clear that only those who fully open their minds and hearts to seek the current living Master (i.e. those who understand: *He **who comes** in the Name of the Lord*) will be able to find and recognize Him.

The use of a book for the study of any profound subject requires a **knowledgeable** teacher in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. God has always provided such a teacher to every generation, as stated in the preceding passage from MATTHEW. Not a self appointed teacher, or one appointed by men, but one of God's own choice. Knowing this Divine Teacher actually eliminates the necessity of reading or referring to any books – including the Bible. As late as A.D. 130, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, tells us how eagerly he used to interview those who personally knew the apostles and their associates, and ask them what the apostles really said, for he felt that in this way he was in much closer touch with the original gospel facts than he could ever be by reading a written record. In fact, all sacred scriptures may be likened to a Spiritual map book. The use of a map is only necessary to indicate **the way** to some destination. When the way is known, there is no longer any need for a map. Unfortunately, religions have substituted a map for God Himself – the map has now become the means *and* the end. The scriptures have become enough in themselves – rather like studying a holiday brochure or guidebook, but **never actually going**

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anywhere. Some people even take extreme steps to protect and comfort their holy books. For instance, Sikhs treat their sacred scripture (the Adi Granth) with the reverence they would give to a living Spiritual Master. Their holy book resides on a *palki* (a covered, cushioned couch, mounted on poles) that is set on a platform and covered by elaborate awnings. While the book is open, a royal *churi* (an elaborately decorated fan), is waved over it. Orthodox Judaism also treats its sacred scrolls with much respect. In the synagogues, they use only handwritten texts on scrolls of parchment. While reading these, a special rod is used as a pointer in order to avoid any contact of the reader's hand with the scroll. Great care is also taken to avoid the scroll coming into contact with the ground, as this would be considered irreverent. Such adoration of mere books, rather than the living Master, is truly obscene, but is practised to some degree by all religions!

All the world's major religions originated from a misguided attachment to a genuine Spiritual Master. During the lifetime of such a Master, there are basically two categories of follower/disciple. Firstly, there are the "outsiders" or "believers" – those who listen to the Master's words and accept and follow Him, and have great respect and adoration for Him, but who do not actually receive the Sacred Gift – *Initiation into the Mysteries of God* – and do not understand about the continual succession of Masters who reveal those Mysteries. Then there is the "inner core" of "gnostics" – those (by comparison, few in numbers) who are deemed worthy by the Master to be initiated into the Sacred Mysteries, and who thus understand the process of revelation (personal initiation) through a continuous chain of Masters. When a Master dies, His initiated disciples know that God will appoint another in his place, and thus will go to follow Him. But many (generally those

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"outsiders"/"believers" who are so attached to the previous Master that they do not accept or even look for the new living Master) merely hold on to cherished memories of their now deceased Master, and pass on stories of His life to others. As these stories are orally related from one to another, they become enhanced, expanded, and embellished (e.g. with many miracles and wonders, which simple, immature people like to hear). These stories rarely tell of the one *real* miracle and wonder: the Mystical/Spiritual Revelation given by the Master, which leads to True Eternal LIFE – this is only known and experienced by the 'elect' (i.e. the "*chosen ones*"). Eventually, as these original followers (the "outsiders") die, it becomes necessary for the new developing religion to collect and preserve these oral stories in written form.¹²⁹

The next step in the process is when the so-called educated (intellectual) theologians take over, and formulate the ideology and structure of yet another smug worldly orthodoxy.¹³⁰ At this point, as the congregation grows, and monetary donations come flooding in, the new "orthodox" religion becomes powerful, wealthy, and political, and begins condemning all others – even, and especially, the genuine "*chosen ones*" (Gnostics) who follow the true *living* Master.¹³¹ It is, in fact, these so-called *orthodoxies* which should be called heresy! As time passes, various theologians come up with new ideas and

¹²⁹ A very important question should here be considered: If it was so important for an accurate record of Jesus' life and teachings to be preserved, then why did He not write it Himself? This would have avoided any ambiguity and confusion as to the truth of the variant stories (at least as far as Christians are concerned) and alleviated the necessity of Biblical criticism. The answer is that, as a living Master is always present on Earth, there is no necessity for historical stories about any previous Master.

¹³⁰ This is precisely where Saul (St. Paul) came into the story!

¹³¹ The true followers of God are ALWAYS rejected, despised, ridiculed, or persecuted by the 'orthodox' administrators of this world. See e.g. ISAIAH 51:7; MATT.5:10-12; 10:16-23; MARK 13:9; LUKE 6:22; & JOHN 15:20-21.

Conclusions

beliefs about this or that meaning of the written scripture. Thus, over time, a variety of creeds, sects, cults, and divisions emerge. This process can be clearly observed within the history of every religion. The truth of the living Messiah is rejected by all, and the churches of satan continue to rule the world.

THE 'GOD-MAN' IN OTHER SCRIPTURES**IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:**

"No man of common mind can reveal the Spirit; such men dispute one against the other. But when the uncommon man (i.e. a true Master) speaks, dispute is over." (Katha Upanisad 1:2:8).

"Arise! Wake up! Learn Wisdom at the Master's feet." (Katha Upanisad 1:3:14).

"Though the Supreme One lives in this world and maintains it, the ignorant do not see Him." (Brihadaranyaka Upanisad 1:4:7).

"This Supreme Knowledge is revealed through the unbroken succession of true Masters." (Bhagavad Gita 4:2).

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in Righteousness, I (Krishna – the man-god), Myself, descend to Earth. To deliver the pious and to destroy the evil, and to re-establish true Religion, I manifest Myself again and again." (Bhagavad Gita 4:7-8).

"Seek the true Master and approach Him humbly with service. He can reveal Divine Knowledge to you for He is a Seer of Truth." (Bhagavad Gita 4:34).

"The foolish mock at My (God's) descending as a human being. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over everything." (Bhagavad Gita 9:11).

IN EGYPTIAN SCRIPTURES:

"When Thou comest forth in peace there arise shouts of delight to Thee, O Lord of Heaven, Thou Prince of the

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THE 'GOD-MAN' IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

Earth... Thy Father Tatunen (God of the Earth) liftest Thee up... Thou becomest a Divine Being on the Earth." (Book of the Dead, Chapter 15, Hymn 5).

"I am the Gracious One, the God who dwelleth among you." (Book of the Dead 97:5).

"I am a Divine Being among you." (Book of the Dead 115:3).

"The Prince of rays and beams of Light, who, having revealed Himself, gives Life to all men... Who, though ancient in years, shines forth in the form of one who is young... the God-Prince who hath been Prince from the time that He came into being... the Lord of Life, who giveth unto whom He pleases... the Lord of Delight, whose Name is sweet and beloved." (Book of the Dead of Nesi-Khonsu).

"Seek a guide who will lead you by the hand to the gates of [Divine] Knowledge where is the brilliant Light which is free from darkness... where all are sober and turn their hearts to see Him who wishes to be seen." (Poimandres : Corpus Hermeticum 7:2).

IN GREEK SCRIPTURES:

"He (God) is here in gladness, handsome, smiling, as God should be... You are present: we can see You, not carved in wood or stone, but real." (Athenaeus 6, 253D).

IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:

THE 'GOD-MAN' IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

"As long as a Tathagata¹³² arises not, an Arahant,¹³³ a Buddha Supreme, there is no shining forth of the Great Light, of the Great Radiance, but only gross darkness, the darkness of bewilderment prevails; thus there is no revelation, no [true] teaching... and no making plain of the 'Four' Noble Truths. But as soon as a Tathagata arises, then all these things take place." (Samyutta-Nikaya, v. 442).

"It is for the purpose of revealing the gnosis of Enlightenment that the Saviour has arisen in the world... Remember that the Guides of the world unfailingly speak the Truth: 'There is only one single vehicle, and a second there is not'... The Tathagata is endowed with Gnosis... He continually appears in the material world... His purpose is to set free from greed, hatred, and delusion the beings in the world who are blinded by the darkness and obscuring membrane of ignorance." (Vasubandhu: 'Saddharmapundarika').

"May the Spiritual Teachers of the Inspired Line lead us." (Bardol Thodol – The Tibetan Book of the Dead).

IN MANDAEAN SCRIPTURES:

"Why do you people weep? Why does your glory vanish? For I (God) manifest My form for you, I enter into the world." (Text taken from W. Foerster, *GNOSIS*, vol. 2, p.232).

"You (Manda d'Haiye¹³⁴) have come, You come, and thus

¹³² 'Tathagata' is another title for a Buddha (i.e. the Supremely "Enlightened One" – the man-god).

¹³³ Another title for an Enlightened One, meaning "Worthy One".

¹³⁴ Manda d'Haiye means: Knowledge/Knower of [Spiritual] Life. It is a title used by the Mandaeans for the Saviour / Lord / man-god.

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THE 'GOD-MAN' IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

You make Yourself known. You are the One who has no end, Infinite and Eternal. You are Father, Brother, and Son; You are the Source, You are the Great Root of Life." (Text taken from W. Foerster, GNOSIS, vol.2, p.286).

"Year after year, generation after generation I (the Lord) have been in the world, but they did not know Me, they did not know that I dwell in their world." (Ginza 153).

IN ISLAMIC SCRIPTURES:

"Children of Adam, when [Genuine] Apostles of your own come to proclaim to you My (God's) revelations, those that take heed and mend their ways will have nothing to fear; but those who deny and scorn Our revelations shall be the heirs of hell." (Koran 7:35-36).

"He (God) sends forth His Apostle with guidance and the true faith to make it triumphant over all religions, however much the idolaters may dislike it." (Koran 9:33).

"Lost are those who disbelieve in meeting with God... For a Messenger is sent to every nation." (Koran 10:46-48).

"The true Prophet is blessed by God and all His angels. Bless Him, then, you who are true believers, and greet Him with a worthy salutation." (Koran 33:56).

"They marvel that a Prophet of their own should arise amongst them. 'He is a cunning enchanter', say the unbelievers." (Koran 38:5).

"They marvel that a Prophet of their own should arise amongst them. The unbelievers say: 'This is indeed a strange thing'." (Koran 50:2).

THE 'GOD-MAN' IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

"The Prophet who warns you now is of the succession of the Prophets of old." (Koran 53:56).

"He (God) sends forth Apostles among the nations to reveal to them His Mysteries, which purify them, and give them Wisdom and Knowledge." (Koran 62:2).

"When an Apostle brings them proof, they say: 'Shall a mere mortal be our guide?' They deny the Truth and give no heed... Believe, then, in God, His Apostle, and His Light." (Koran 64:6-8).

IN SIKH SCRIPTURES:

"The Guru (i.e. the true Spiritual Master) is God." (Japji 5).

"The Guru of gurus is one, though He appears many times in various forms (i.e. incarnations)." (Rag Asa, p.12).

"Only by the Guru's teaching is the Divine Light manifested." (Rag Dhanasri, p.663).

"By meeting the Guru happiness is achieved and all sinful desires are quenched in His virtue." (Sri Rag, p.21).

"In each succeeding age the Guru is God." (Rag Ramkali, p.942).

"Without the Guru this principle is not discovered: that the Unseen One dwells in the soul. When the true Guru is met, the Name and Word are implanted in the soul." (Rag Maru, p.1092).

**THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN
OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:

"The Seers guard the path of Truth: they keep secret the highest Name." (Rig Veda 10:5, 2).

"Lord of the Word! Thy Seers have set in motion Thy original creative Word, Thy Holy Name, Thy most pure and perfectly guarded secret which is revealed through Love... Those who look externally cannot see the Word, and those who listen externally cannot hear it." (Rig Veda 10:71, 1-4).

"Thy beloved children have discovered the Immortal Name." (Rig Veda 10:123, 4).

"That Mystic Word is indeed the Eternal Spirit! It is Supreme! Whoever knows that Word fulfils his desire. That Word is the Ultimate Foundation; whoever finds it is adored among the Saints." (Katha Upanisad 1:2:16-17).

"The Mystic Word is the bow; the soul is the arrow; the Spirit is the target." (Mundaka Upanisad 2:2:4).

"The Mystic Word is Imperishable; the Essence of all that is." (Mandukya Upanisad 1).

"The Sound of the Mystic Chant is the Holy Word. It is Immortal and fearless. By taking refuge in it one becomes Immortal and fearless." (Chandogya Upanisad 1:4:4).

"Worship the true Spiritual Name. He who meditates on the true Name of God will reach God and find Eternal Freedom." (Chandogya Upanisad 7:1:4-5).

"The secret Name is the Reality of Reality." (Brihadaranyaka Upanisad 2:1:20).

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THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"I (the Lord) am the Sacred Word... I am the very chant of the Holy Name." (Bhagavad Gita 10:25).

IN EGYPTIAN SCRIPTURES:

"I am He whose Name is hidden, and whose habitation is Holy for Eternity." (Book of the Dead 7:4).

"The Mighty Spirit taketh possession of me and carrieth me away, behold, because I am provided with His Mystic Word for Eternity." (Book of the Dead 10:2-3).

"I am clothed and wholly provided for by Thy Magical Word, O Ra (= 'God of Light')." (Book of the Dead 32:8).

"May I gain the mastery of the Great and Mighty Word which is within my body which is my [true] home." (Book of the Dead 110:21).

"I am the Great Name which giveth Light." (Book of the Dead 119:2-3).

"I gave breath unto him in the hidden place by means of the power of the Mystic Word of My utterance." (Book of the Dead 182:11).

"He hath illumined thy path with rays of splendour; He hath destroyed all the evil defects which belong to thy members by the Magical Power of His Word." (Book of the Dead 183:9-11).

"From out of the Light the Holy Word entered into nature... The luminous Word which comes from the Divine Mind is the Son of God... Understand that what you see and hear within yourself is the Word of the Lord: the Divine Mind is

THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

God the Father. They are not separate from each other, for their unity is Life." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 1:5 & 6).

"We thank Thee, with our whole soul and heart stretched out to Thee, Ineffable Name... that Thou hast shown to all of us Fatherly Goodness, Love and Kindness." (Logos Teleios: pseudo-Apuleius, Asclepius 41).

IN MESOPOTAMIAN SCRIPTURES:

"He whose pure Word gave us Life, He is the Lord of Splendour, Mace, and Sceptre." (Akkadian Creation Epic).

"I am accomplished in Wisdom, I vie with the True Word." (Sumerian Hymn: 'The King of the Path').

IN ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES:

"The Lord God said: 'My Name... which is that of the Holy Immortals, is the Holy Word of Power." (Yasht 1:3).

"Reveal to me that Name of Yours... which is the greatest, best, fairest, most effective and... healing." (Yasht 1:5).

"With this Word I shall conquer, in this Word shall I prevail, with this which is the best of weapons." (Vendidad 19:9).

IN GREEK & ROMAN SCRIPTURES:

"The One Word alone alleviates all suffering." (Sophocles: 'The End of Oedipus').

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THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:

"*Reciting thousands of words is useless; only by hearing the One Word of Truth is Peace achieved.*" (Dhammapada 100-102).

"*There are some beings whose mental eye is darkened by scarcely any dirt; but if they do not hear the Word they cannot attain Salvation... Open now the door to Immortality; let them hear the Word revealed by the spotless One.*" (Mahavagga 1:5, 6-7).

"*The Enlightened One's Word reveals the Divine Harmony, giving delight and pleasure, Salvation and Truth.*" (Suttanipata 3:3).

"*Supreme Enlightenment will come to all who hear the Name of the Lord Amitabha, and, on hearing it, single mindedly raise their hearts to Him with resolve and true faith.*" (Ashvaghosa: 'Sukhavativyuha').

"*The Pure Land's glorious vision is bliss that man may claim if he worthily repeats Amida's Sacred Name. Ill seems each occupation that might free the heart from blame compared with invocation of the Buddha's Sacred Name.*" (Poem of Honen).

IN MANDAEAN SCRIPTURES:

"*There is no name like His (the King of Light's) Name, and there is no one who can name Him by His [real] Name... By His Word He planted the chosen ones and raised up the perfect.*" (Ginza Rba 1:5-7).

THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"I (the Messenger of Light) became a King to the Nasoreans, who received Praise and Stability through My Name... and by My Name they ascend to the Place of Light." (Jb. 59).

IN ISLAMIC SCRIPTURES:

"God! There is no God but Him! Most beautiful is His Holy Name." (Koran 59:24).

"He is God... His Name is most Sacred." (Koran 59:24).

IN SIKH SCRIPTURES:

"God is One: He is the True Name." (Japji: Proem).

"By meditating on the Name the blind man sees the Way." (Japji 11).

"Through trusting in Thy Divine Name the mind soars high into Enlightenment." (Japji 13).

"Those who meditate on the Holy Name... their faces shine brightly." (Japji: Epilogue).

"It is not possible to say how great Thy Name is!" (Sri Rag, p.14).

"Without knowing the Holy Name, all are cast away." (Sri Rag, p.55).

"May I dwell in the Name, so that the Name will abide in my heart. Without the Guru (Spiritual Master) we walk in darkness, without the Word Wisdom is lost. By the Guru's

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THE HOLY 'NAME' (or 'WORD') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

Word Divine Light shines and we are absorbed in Truth." (Sri Rag, p.55).

"The mind is filled with real and beneficial Knowledge when it is imbued with the precious Name of God... Lord, let Thy Holy and loving Name be in my heart, I have come to Thy Sanctuary. The waves of avarice and greed are overcome by the pre-eminence of God's Name in the soul." (Guiri Ashtapadi, p.505).

"Without the Name, great fever ensues." (Rag Asa, p.438).

"Without God's Name we stray as fools in deception and are destroyed. Those who do not devote themselves to the Name of God, who do not have Truth in their hearts, end up in anguish and remorse." (Rag Asa, p.438).

**THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN
OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:

"To you, Holy Fire, which shines upon darkness, we come every day... Be easy for us to reach, like a father to his son. Abide with us, Holy Fire, for our happiness." (Rig Veda 1:1, 7-9).

"We have risen out of darkness, seeing the highest Light around us, going to the Sun, the God among gods, the highest Light." (Rig Veda 1:50, 10).

"With His clear, strong Flame He shines riches upon us... blazing without fuel in the waters... He shines for ever, with undarkened Flame, remaining in the Highest Place." (Rig Veda 2:35, 4 & 14).

"The Holy Fire shines forth with Heavenly Light; by His power He makes all things manifest." (Rig Veda 5:2, 9).

"We have gone to the Light, we have found God." (Rig Veda 8:48, 3).

"Where the inextinguishable Light shines... in that Immortal, unfading world, O Purifier, place me... Where the worlds are made of Light, there make me Immortal." (Rig Veda 9:113, 7 & 9).

"The Seers guard this revelation that shines like the sun on the Path of Truth." (Rig Veda 10:177, 2).

"Holy Light! Illuminate the way for us." (Isa Upanisad 18).

"Understand about the Heavenly Fire; attain to the Infinite World and become established; know that which is in the secret place... The Fire that leads to Heaven." (Katha Upanisad 1:1:14-19).

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THE MYSTIC ‘LIGHT’ (or ‘FIRE’) OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

“No physical sun shines there, nor moon and stars, nor lightnings – not to mention any earthly fire! It is He that shines there, and everything shines from Him. By His Light everything is illumined.” (Katha Upanisad 2:2:15).

“When the mind is overcome by the Light of God it dreams no more; then there arises true happiness right here in this body.” (Prasna Upanisad 4:6).

“Shining, yet hidden, the Spirit lives in the secret cave of the heart.” (Mundaka Upanisad 2:2:1).

“The Light which shines in the highest Heaven... this is the same Light which shines within man... One should worship that inner Light.” (Chandogya Upanisad 3:13:7-8).

“A wise man, separating himself from carnal things, unites with the Highest Light and realises his True form.” (Chandogya Upanisad 8:3:4).

“When man crosses that bridge, though it be night, it shall be day; for Heaven is shining always.” (Chandogya Upanisad 8:4:2).

“The bright Eternal Self that lives in the Light of the body... that is Immortality, that is Spirit, that is All.” (Brihadaranyaka Upanisad 2:5:8).

“Having pierced through the darkness, one goes to what is not enveloped in darkness. Then one sees Him who sparkles like a wheel of fire, of the colour of the sun: the mighty Spirit that is beyond darkness... When one has seen Him, one goes to Immortality.” (Maitri Upanisad 6:24).

“I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of

**THE MYSTIC ‘LIGHT’ (or ‘FIRE’) OF GOD IN
OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

“Knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.” (Bhagavad Gita 10:11).

“If a thousand suns should suddenly shine forth together in the sky, their light might resemble the Light of God.” (Bhagavad Gita 11:12).

“I see the splendour of Your infinite beauty which illumines the whole universe... How difficult Thou art to see! But I see Thee: as Fire, as the Sun, blinding, immeasurable.” (Bhagavad Gita 11:17).

“Thou shonest there with Thy beams, O Thou great God, Osiris, the eternal Prince.” (Book of the Dead 15 [6]: 16).

“I am the Great One, son of the Great One; I am Fire, the son of Fire.” (Book of the Dead 43:2).

“I have come to give Light in the darkness... I have opened the way.” (Book of the Dead 80:9-11).

“The God of Light has invigorated me... I have come from the pool of Flame which is in the field of Fire.” (Book of the Dead 98:4-7).

“May the God of Light open His arms to me.” (Book of the Dead 124:9).

“Homage to Thee, O Thou who art within Thy Divine Shrine, Who shonest with rays of Light and sendest forth radiance from Thyself, Who decrees eternal joy unto those who love Him.” (Book of the Dead 134:1-2).

“He hath made the God Shu to shine upon thy body; He hath illuminated thy path with Rays of Splendour.” (Book of the Dead 183:8-9).

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THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"Atennu, the Prince of rays and beams of Light, who, having revealed Himself, gave Life to all men." (Book of the Dead of Nesi-Khonsu).

"Suddenly everything opened before me in a flash, and I beheld a limitless vision. Everything became Light, serene and joyful, and I was filled with Love from the vision... From this Light the Holy Word entered into nature, and pure Fire shot up from the moist nature into the height... That Light is I – the Divine Mind – your God... Therefore meditate on the Light and learn to know it." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 1:4-6).

"Those who are Enlightened in their soul by a ray from the Divine Light – and they are but few! – from these the demons desist... all others are carried and driven along by the demons, loving and cherishing their own works." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 15).

"Saved by Thy Light, we rejoice that Thou hast shown Thyself to us whole, and made us gods while still in our bodies through the Vision of Thee." (Logos Teleios: pseudo-Apuleius, Asclepius 41).

IN ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES:

"Whosoever repeats the Holy Word... his soul will I, Ahura Mazda, bring... to the best World, to the best Righteousness, to the endless Light." (Yasna 19:6).

"I shall reveal Righteousness so that you may be perfected and see the Light." (Yasna 30:1).

"The Light is revealed to those who seek Thy Holy Spirit."

**THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN
OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

(Yasna 43:2).

"The Place of Light, where Righteousness dwells with Devotion, where the Power of Love reigns, where God the Lord resides in Glory." (Yasna 46:16).

"I, Ahura Mazda, the Creator, will make his soul see the Joy of Paradise: boundless Light, unearned Felicity, and Eternal Bliss." (Tahmuras Fragments 80-82).

"No one who remains in darkness can look at the Light." (Shikand-Gumanik Vajar 13:61).

"When Ohrmazd spoke in this manner, I was astonished; for I saw a Light, but no body did I see." (Arday Viraz Namag 101:10-11).

"The region of Light, which is called Eternal Light, is the abode of Ahura Mazda." (Bundahishn 1:2).

IN BABYLONIAN SCRIPTURES:

"All things have for their Father the One Fire." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 15).

"She is the Energizer and revealer of Life-bringing Fire. The Life-giving Might of Fire possessed of mighty power." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 19).

"Thoughts of the Father: Brightness a-flame, pure Fire!" (Chaldaean Oracles, K 24).

"To the Gnostic Fire-whirls of the Gnostic Fire do all things yield." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 42).

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THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"Urging himself to the centre of Sounding Light; armed at all points, clad in the bloom of Sounding Light, arming both mind and soul with three-barbed Might." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 51).

"Unto the Light and to the Father's Rays you should hasten... for if the mortal draw near to the Fire, he shall have Light from God." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 52-53).

"The Gods tell us to gain understanding of the Light form which they reveal." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 57).

"When you see the Sacred Fire which flashes radiant yet formless throughout the depths of the world, then listen to the Voice of Fire." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 58).

IN GREEK & ROMAN SCRIPTURES:

"Suddenly a marvellous Light comes to meet the initiate and he enters open fields in a Land of Purity; there are Voices... and Majestic and Holy things to greet the ear and eye." (Plutarch: "On the Soul"; in Stobaeus 4, 52, 49).

IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:

"Vision arose in me of things not seen before, Knowledge arose, Wisdom arose, Light arose." (Mahavagga 1:6:23).

"Why do you not seek the Light, you who are shrouded in darkness?" (Dhammapada 146).

"The True Self is a Lamp." (Dhammapada 236 & 238).

"I lay no wood, O priests, for fires on altars. The Fire

THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

which I kindle shines deep within." (Samyutta-Nikaya 1:169).

"His Gnosis will blaze forth like the sun and remove the darkness of delusion from this world." (Ashvaghosha: 'Buddhacarita' 1:60).

"Behold the Buddha's glory shining forth, as in the vaulted heaven beams the sun." (Buddhaghosa: 'Visuddimagga').

"The Benefactor of the world, the Bringer of the Light!" (Mahavastu 1:232).

"By this contemplating, one recognises one's inner Light; and, merging one's self therein, in at-one-ment, Buddhahood is attained." (Bardo Thodol – Tibetan Book of the Dead).

"First will appear, swifter than lightning, the Luminous Splendour of the colourless Light of Emptiness, which will surround you on all sides." (Bardo Thodol).

"O mist of spring, thou hidest all things beautiful and bright as if there did not shine the True, imperishable Light." (Hymns of Honen).

IN MANDAEAN SCRIPTURES:

"God, the sublime King of Light, the God of Truth... the Pure Radiance and the great Light which is not extinguished... Radiance, which is immutable; Light which is inextinguishable, Beauty, Lustre, and Glory, in which there is no fault." (Ginza Rba 1:1-3).

"I became a King to the Nasoreans... and by My Name

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THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"they ascend to the Place of Light and behold the Place of Light. The elect righteous, who wear My garment, are filled with Light... Whoever is Enlightened and instructed by Me rises and beholds the Place of Light." (Jb. Chapter 59).

"They were to awaken the souls that had stumbled away from the Place of Light... that they might lift their faces to the Place of Light." (Ginza 308).

"I am Yokabar-Kushtar, who has gone forth from my Father's house and come hither with hidden Splendour and with Eternal Light." (Ginza 318).

"From the Place of Light have I gone forth, from Thee, bright habitation. I come to feel the hearts, to measure and try all minds, to see in whose heart I dwell, in whose mind I repose... I come and find the truthful and believing hearts... I take them and guide them up to the World of Light." (Ginza 389).

"Hearken and be instructed, and rise up victorious to the Place of Light." (Das Johannesbuch der Mandaer 57).

IN ISLAMIC SCRIPTURES:

"God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. His Light may be compared to a niche that enshrines a lamp, the lamp within a crystal of star-like brilliance... Its very oil would almost shine forth, though no fire touched it. Light upon Light; God guides to His Light whom He will." (Koran 24:35).

"He sends His blessings to you through His Messengers, that He may lead you from darkness into the Light."

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THE MYSTIC 'LIGHT' (or 'FIRE') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

(Koran 33:43).

"Believe, then, in God and His Messenger, and in the Light which we have sent down." (Koran 64:8).

"The kindled Fire of God will raise up the hearts of men. It will enclose them on every side with great strength." (Koran 104:6-9).

THE MYSTIC 'SOUNDS' ('HEAVENLY HARMONIES') IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:

"The Eternal Sound is the final abode of all the Gods. What can they achieve who do not know this Sound? Only those who know it may sit together here." (Rig Veda 1:164, 39).

"The Sacred Sound, worthy of hearing, that you have revealed to me here." (Rig Veda 1:165, 11).

"From the first true sacrifice in which everything was given, the Holy Sound was born." (Rig Veda 10:90, 9).

"The Sacred Drink reverberates together with the Holy Sound of the Divine Chant." (Rig Veda 10:130, 4).

"The Holy Sound is the Mystic Word; it is Immortal and fearless. By taking refuge in it one becomes Immortal and fearless. He who chants the Sacred Word with full Knowledge, thus taking refuge in its Immortal and fearless Sound, becomes Immortal like the Saints." (Chandogya Upanisad 1:4:4-5).

"Have you ever enquired about that initiation which allows a man to hear what is not heard, think what is not thought, and know what is not known?" (Chandogya Upanisad 6:1:3).

"By uniting the breath, the Holy Word, and the mind, one may go aloft to the Supreme... they hear the great Sound of the space within the heart which has been likened to the sound of rivers, or bells, or cymbals, or the croaking of frogs, or rain falling." (Maitri Upanisad 6:21-22).

IN ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES:

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THE MYSTIC ‘SOUNDS’ (‘HEAVENLY HARMONIES’) IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"The home of Divine Sound is reserved for Holy souls, and none of the wicked can enter its bright Holy Path to Ahura Mazda." (Yasht 3:4).

"Joyfully the soul of the Righteous moves on to the golden throne of Ahura Mazda (the Lord of Light), to the golden seats of the Holy Immortals, into the Home of Song (the Divine Sound), the very abode of the Lord God... I invoke the endless Sovereign Light; I invoke the Blissful Paradise of the Saints; I invoke the abode of the Divine Sound, the Home of Ahura Mazda." (Vendidad 19:32-35).

IN BABYLONIAN SCRIPTURES:

"From Him (God) leap forth Thunderings inexorable." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 20).

"Urging himself to the centre of Sounding Light... armed at all points, clad in the bloom of Sounding Light, arming both mind and soul with three-barbed Might." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 51).

"When you see the Sacred Fire... then listen to the Voice of Fire." (Chaldaean Oracles, K 58).

IN EGYPTIAN SCRIPTURES:

"The darkness was transformed into a humid nature, indescribably twirling, producing smoke as from fire, and uttering an inexpressible wailing Sound. Then an inarticulate Sound issued from within, comparable to the sound of fire." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 1:4-5).

"He hears certain powers above the eighth sphere

THE MYSTIC 'SOUNDS' ('HEAVENLY HARMONIES') IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

exalting God with a sweet Sound." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 1:26).

IN GREEK & ROMAN SCRIPTURES:

"What is this loud and agreeable Sound which fills my ears?... Men's ears, ever filled with this Sound, have become deaf to It... But this Mighty Music, produced by the revolution of the Universe, cannot be perceived by carnal ears, any more than you can look straight at the sun, your sense of sight being overpowered by its radiance." (Cicero: 'De Re Publica').

IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:

"The Enlightened One's Word reveals the Divine Harmony, giving delight and pleasure, Salvation and Truth." (Suttanipata 3:3).

"With the Heavenly ear, perfectly pure and surpassing that of carnal men, one hears the Celestial Sounds." (Buddhaghosa: 'Visuddhimagga').

"The Sound which issues from the Heavenly Waters is as pleasant as that of the most intricate of musical instruments, and which, skilfully played, emits heavenly music. It is deep, commanding, distinct, clear, pleasant to hear, touching the heart, delightful, sweet, pleasant, and one never tires of hearing it... Such is the Sound that reaches the ears of Enlightened beings." (Sukhavativyuha).

"The Sound of the Divine One is as the clouds and the drums, who thunders like rain-cloud, possesses a sweet

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THE MYSTIC 'SOUNDS' ('HEAVENLY HARMONIES') IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

"Voice like Brahma, a Voice possessing the whole range of musical tones." (Saddharmapundarikasutra).

"Within those Radiances, the natural Sound of Truth reverberates like a thousand thunders." (Bardo Thodol – The Tibetan Book of the Dead).

"If you desire to hear the Thunderous Voice of Truth, exhaust your words, empty your thoughts, for then you may come to recognise this One Essence." (Daito Kokushi).

IN MANDAEAN SCRIPTURES:

"Five powerful and mighty qualities emanate from Him (the King of Light)... the third is His sweet Voice by which we receive Bliss." (Ginza Rba 1:4).

IN SIKH SCRIPTURES:

"The Guru's Word is the Eternal inner Sound." (Japji 5).

"Where is the gate, and where the mansion from whence Thou watchest all creation: and from whence Thy beautiful Sounds come forth as Divine Harmony?" (Japji 27).

"Let Knowledge of God be thy food... and listen to the Divine Music which beats in every heart." (Japji 29).

"The Heavenly Sounds make the lowest want to rise up." (Japji 32).

"In the stage of Divine Knowledge Wisdom shines forth; it is the realm of the Eternal Sound which gives countless

THE MYSTIC ‘SOUNDS’ (“HEAVENLY HARMONIES”) IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

joys and pleasures.” (Japji 36).

“Divine Music reverberates within every soul – continuous, self-sustained – heard through revelation! Few are the Saints who are granted this Knowledge.” (Sri Rag, p.62).

“The unstruck Word is Thy Temple drum.” (Rag Dhanasri, p.663).

“The Word is my Guru, I am a disciple of the Mystic Sound heard in meditation.” (Rag Ramkali, p.942).

**THE MYSTIC 'FOOD' (or 'DRINK') OF GOD
IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

IN HINDU SCRIPTURES:

"O would that I might reach that dear refuge of His, where those devoted to God dwell in joy... There, in Vishnu's highest place, is the Fountain of Ambrosia." (Rig Veda 1:154, 5).

"Your inexhaustible breast, O Lord, that flows with the Food of Life, that satisfies all desire, freely giving the greatest Treasure." (Rig Veda 1:164, 49).

"Let him obtain vital strength for his body through the nourishing and Inspiring Drink." (Rig Veda 1:165, 15).

"Let us become ecstatic, O God, and invigorated by Your Drink of Ecstasy... Let us discover the Drink whose luscious drops give [Spiritual] strength and Ecstasy." (Rig Veda 1:185, 9 & 11).

"The 'Elixir of Immortality', that is the name of the Secret Food: 'tongue of the Gods', 'navel of Immortality'... these streams of [Spiritual] butter flow from the ocean of the heart, enclosed by a hundred fences so that the enemy (i.e. Satan) cannot see them." (Rig Veda 4:58, 1 & 5).

"I gave him the Ambrosia that sets one free." (Rig Veda 5:2, 3).

"Those pure and clear Waters that drip Honey... All the Gods drink in ecstasy the exhilarating nourishment... Let the Waters, who are Goddesses, help me here and now." (Rig Veda 7:49, 3 & 4).

"I have tasted the sweet Drink of Life, knowing that it inspires good thoughts and joyous expansiveness to the extreme, that all the Gods and mortals seek it together, calling it Honey... We have drunk the Soma; we have

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THE MYSTIC 'FOOD' (or 'DRINK') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

become Immortal... O you glorious, freedom giving drops!" (Rig Veda 8:48, 1 & 3).

"Four hidden Springs pouring forth Butter carry down from Heaven the Ambrosia that is the true [Spiritual] gift." (Rig Veda 9:74, 6).

"Waters, you are the ones who bring us the Life Force... Let us share in that most delicious Sap that you have... Waters, yield your cure as an armour for my body... Carry far away all of this that has gone bad in me... I have sought the Waters today; we have joined with their Sap. O Holy Fire, full of moisture, come and flood me with Splendour." (Rig Veda 10:9, v. 1, 2, & 7-9).

"When the embodied soul is able to transcend the lower nature of being, he will become free from rebirth and suffering, and may drink of the immortal Nectar even in this life." (Bhagavad Gita 14:20).

IN EGYPTIAN SCRIPTURES:

"I am the creator of the Divine Food... I proclaim Right and Truth, and I live therein. I am the Divine Food, which is incorruptible in My Name of Spirit." (Book of the Dead 85:2-4).

"Hail, Great God, thou Lord of Heavenly Food!" (Book of the Dead 106:2).

"Homage to You, O Lord of Food, I have come in peace to Your field to receive Heavenly Food." (Book of the Dead 110: vignette).

"Hail, Ye Gods... let Your Pools be opened to me, let Your

**THE MYSTIC 'FOOD' (or 'DRINK') OF GOD
IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

Streams be opened to me... let me be satisfied with Your Food, let me be lifted up, let my heart be great." (Book of the Dead 149 [14]:6-9).

"I (Poimandres) sowed in them the Word of Wisdom, and they were nourished by Ambrosial Water." (Poimandres: Corpus Hermeticum 1:29).

IN MESOPOTAMIAN SCRIPTURES:

"Your Watered Gardens are filled with Honey Wine, and in Your Palace grows Eternal Life." (Sumerian Hymns: To Ninurta as God of Vegetation).

"In the 'Gate of Pure Water' I was sprinkled with the Water of Purification." (Akkadian Wisdom Literature: 'I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom' 4:88).

"The 'Honey-man', the 'Honey-man' sweetens me always, my Lord, the 'Honey-man' of God, my favoured of the womb, whose hand is Honey, whose foot is Honey, sweetens me always." (Sumerian Love Song: 'The Honey-man').

IN ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES:

"I am the Sacred Drink, Haoma, the Holy One who drives death away." (Yasna 9:2).

"Praise to Haoma! Good is Haoma... true and righteous by nature... good and healing... It is the best to drink for it completely satisfies the soul." (Yasna 9:17).

"Haoma grants Grace and Knowledge." (Yasna 9:22).

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THE MYSTIC 'FOOD' (or 'DRINK') OF GOD IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:

IN GREEK & ROMAN SCRIPTURES:

"He took a shining key and opened Treasuries full of Nectar and lovely Ambrosia." (Homeric Hymns: Hymn 4).

"In a golden cup his Father extends to him the Divine Nectar." (Homeric Hymn to the Delian Apollo).

"Ambrosial Fountains flow past the Palace and the Throne of Zeus." (Euripides: Hippolytus).

"The rock-bound Spring that fed the twin brothers with Nectar." (Inscription from Santa Prisca).

IN BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES:

"O Thou who rejoices in true kindness... Thou quenchest the fire that vexes living beings, Thou pourest out Nectar: the rain of Truth." (Saddharmapundarikasutra).

IN MANDAEAN SCRIPTURES:

"The Jordans (Spiritual rivers) of the Light Realm are full of white Water, whiter than milk, cool and tasty." (Ginza Rba 1:9).

"The Angel who accompanied me from the abode of the Great Life held a staff of Living Water in His hand... and my sick heart found healing and my alien soul found relief." (Ginza 377).

"Rejoice this day; for you shall enter the gardens watered

**THE MYSTIC 'FOOD' (or 'DRINK') OF GOD
IN OTHER SCRIPTURES:**

by Living Streams and dwell in Eternal Life. This is indeed the Supreme Achievement!" (Koran 57:12).

IN SIKH SCRIPTURES:

"All evil is quenched and extinguished in the devotee by pouring the Water of the Lord. Thus the heart, like the lotus, shall blossom; it shall be filled to the brim with Nectar." (Sri Rag, p.21).

"On me He bestowed the Nectar in a cup, the Nectar which comes from His True and Holy Name." (Rag Majh ki Var, p.150).

"If you have tasted the Divine Ambrosia, you are held spellbound by its wonder." (M 5 Gauri 180-13).

"He is ever intoxicated who drinks the Ambrosia. Other drinks intoxicate, but their effect soon wears off. The God-intoxicated person drinks Ambrosia; for him all other drinks become insipid." (M 5 Asa 377-11).

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2

**THE ORIGIN AND MEANING
OF THE SACRED TABERNACLE:**

'Tabernacle' (Hebrew: *miskan* = dwelling place [of God]) and 'tent' (Hebrew: *ohel*) are the biblical terms used to describe the original Sacred Sanctuary – the very dwelling place of Elohim (the Divine/Holy Spirit) – where personal and private communion between man and God can be achieved.¹³⁵ This Holy place is variously called the "Holy dwelling place"; "tent of the (Divine) Covenant"; "tent of meeting" (i.e. between man and God), etc. The Hebrew term here translated as tent (viz. *ohel*) actually means a 'covering' or 'veil'. This veil is what forms the tent (i.e. "*the abode of the veil*" – see e.g. LXX version of *ECCLESIASTICUS* 50:5), which is actually a covering for the tabernacle. Actually, the tabernacle is our *own body*,¹³⁶ where the Experience and Vision of God may be realised deep within; although this fact has long been forgotten and lost through ignorance – thus the scriptural references to this are now rather vague.

The veil (tent) is used to cover the head and body (tabernacle) of the initiate in order to conceal the "Most Holy," i.e. the four Sacred and secret techniques of Mystic Meditation (Divine Communion) practised by initiated disciples of the living Lord¹³⁷. A remnant of this ancient practise may still be observed today in the traditional prayer shawl (tallith) worn over the head and shoulders by

¹³⁵ "Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." (EXE. 40:34).

¹³⁶ The Holy Temple not made of bricks and mortar, or by human hands (cf. 1stCOR.3:16; 6:19; & MARK 14:58).

¹³⁷ i.e. the HOLY NAME, LIGHT, SOUND, FOOD as described previously (Chapter 2, p.79 ff.). Jesus, also, is reported to have referred to this secret meditation: "***When you pray*** (meditate), ***go into your inner sanctuary, close the doors, and pray to your Father in secret.***" (MATT.6:6). The 'inner sanctuary' referred to here is that sacred place deep within us (which everyone possesses – rich or poor!), and 'closing the doors' refers to closing our exterior sense receptors (i.e. eyes and ears) in order to experience that which is hidden deep within. See also: EXOD. 33:9; 1stKINGS 22:25; PSA.27:5 & 63:2.

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THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE SACRED TABERNACLE:

all orthodox Jews during prayer. The veil used by genuine Mystics while in meditation must be large enough to cover the whole body – thus it is like a 'tent' in which the initiate meets with God (the Divine Spirit). There are many references to this fact in the scriptures, although now much corrupted by ignorant (uninitiated) scribes, translators, and interpreters. The first recorded example of this in the Hebrew tradition is when Noah is meditating and his veil somehow slips off (or is possibly removed), thus revealing to anyone present the secret techniques of Mystic Communion which he is using while in a state of deep Meditation / trance. The following translation of the relevant passage largely agrees with that of Fabre d'Olivet in his book: *THE HEBRAIC TONGUE RESTORED*:

"Noah released his mind from the earthly realm, and began cultivating a higher (Spiritual) consciousness. And rising up with the Spirit, he became [Divinely] intoxicated and [in his exultation] he was [unknowingly] revealed from [the covering of] his tent (or veil). And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the secret mysteries of his father, and divulged them outwardly to his two brothers. So Shem and Japheth took the veil and raised it behind them, and went backward, and covered the secret mysteries of their father; and their faces were turned backward, so that they did not see the secret mysteries of their father." (GEN.9:20-23).

Compare this translation with the (Spiritually) meaningless and degrading texts preserved in the various 'orthodox' versions, which completely contradict what is said of Noah in GEN.6:9, i.e. "*Noah was a Righteous man – the Perfect One of his time – who walked with God.*"

Another example of this covering or veil (tent) is given in EXODUS when Moses communes with God:

"When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not

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aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. And Moses finished speaking to them. He put a veil over his face whenever he entered the LORD'S presence to speak with Him, and he removed the veil when he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face whenever he went in to speak with the LORD." (EXOD.34:29-35).

This passage has often been incorrectly translated into English; see above, p.97, note 83.

The following excerpts (from a grossly elaborated passage in EXODUS) describe the dwelling place of God (the Spirit):

"They (the Israelites) must prepare the Holy place¹³⁸ so that My (the Lord's) Spirit may dwell with them. According to all that I shall reveal, you must prepare the dwelling place (tabernacle)... And there I shall meet with you and make My Spirit KNOWN... You shall make sheets of goats' hair to cover (veil) the dwelling place... and the veil shall separate you (from prying eyes) while in the Holy place of the Most Holy." (EXOD.25:8-9 & 22; 26:7 & 33).

¹³⁸ This simply means preparing themselves – their inward Spiritual Heart, and a suitable place for meditation – for the actual experience of God.

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2

PAUL – The False ‘Apostle’ to the Gentiles

Saul (later known as St. Paul) was born c. AD.3 to Jewish parents in Tarsus, a Roman provincial city in modern day Turkey, and apparently acquired the status of a Roman citizen at birth (ACTS 22:27-28). Roman citizenship was a highly prized privilege conferred only on those of high social or governmental standing, those who had done some exceptional service for Rome, or those able to bribe some imperial or provincial administrator to have their names included on a list of constituents. We must assume that Saul's family had somehow acquired this auspicious status, thus passing to him special privileges and protection under Roman law – almost equivalent to today's '*diplomatic immunity*.' Although he was born and grew up among Gentiles, and was thoroughly conversant with their culture, religions, and the Greek language (i.e. a Hellenistic Jew), he was brought up as a devout Pharisee (ACTS 23:6 & 26:4-5), and eventually trained for the orthodox Jewish Priesthood under a prominent Sanhedrin member, Gamaliel (ACTS 22:3). Thus, he was highly educated and fully conversant with the Hebrew Scriptures and traditions (GAL.1:14).

He first comes into view after the death of Jesus, as an energetic and zealous Pharisee, with a violent hatred of the followers of Jesus (initially called followers of "the Way," "Nazarenes"/"Nazarites," or "Ebionites").¹³⁹ Saul was personally involved in the execution of Stephen, the first Christian Martyr (ACTS 7:58 & 22:20). After this the Sanhedrin instituted an all-out persecution of the Jerusalem church. One of the key characters in this persecution was Saul. He spearheaded the hunt for Christians throughout Judea, and spared no effort to seek out any believers, arrest them, imprison them, and put them to death (ACTS 8:3; 22:4; 26:9-11; GAL.1:13-14; 1stTIM.1:13). Apparently he had completed his mission in

¹³⁹ See ACTS 9:2 & 24:5, and also above, p.137, note 106.

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Judea, so he requested and received authorization from the high priest to carry out his "murderous threats" in other cities, such as Damascus (ACTS 9:1-2; 26:10-11). He may have pursued this policy purely to gain the notice, respect, and admiration of the Sanhedrin, as he was training for their ranks and hoped to be accepted as a member (GAL.1:14). Saul, throughout his career, seems to have been very ambitious for power, respect, recognition, and admiration – after all, he was a zealous Pharisee.¹⁴⁰

It was on his way to Damascus (c. A.D.34) to carry out his threats, that Saul apparently received a 'vision'/'revelation' from God. Whether this is true, and whether it was from God, is a matter of speculation. All we can do is look carefully at the evidence that has survived, and come to a logical, unbiased, conclusion. The first passage which describes this experience reads: "*As he (Saul) neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'* The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the voice, but they saw nothing. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." (ACTS 9:3-9). If we compare this passage with two later accounts in ACTS, we find some significant differences.

¹⁴⁰ See the whole of MATT.23, where Jesus gives His impressions of the Pharisees in general. Although it may be claimed that Saul changed when he became a Christian, we will observe that his personality changed little, if at all! In fact, many years after his conversion to Christianity, at the conclusion of three missionary journeys to the Gentile world, he still insisted that he was "a Pharisee" (ACTS 23:6).

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In ACTS 22:9 it states that those who were with Saul at the time saw the heavenly light, but they did not hear the voice which spoke to him. This is exactly the opposite of the previous report which says they saw nothing, but they did hear the voice!¹⁴¹ If we now look at the third account of this same incident (ACTS 26:14-18) we first notice that now everyone falls to the ground – not only Saul! However the first account explicitly states that the men traveling with Saul stood there speechless, while the second account is silent on this matter. Also, in the third account, we are told that the heavenly voice spoke in Aramaic, and the dialogue has now become somewhat extended from the previous two accounts. Here the voice adds: "*I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*" (ACTS 26:16-18). Indeed, it is quite normal for a Spiritual revelation from God to become more detailed or 'enhanced' over time, but there is one extremely important point to understand here. Such an 'enhancement,' or *full realization* of a revelation may take some time simply because genuine Spiritual revelations are not made through words of *any human language* – not in Aramaic or any other!¹⁴² Being unrestricted by the

¹⁴¹ Actually, any revelation or vision from God is a very personal, *inner, Spiritual* experience, which only the receiver will be aware of. Those travelling with Saul would not have seen or heard anything of Saul's supposed experience – only, perhaps, the outward effect on him.

¹⁴² In Scriptural passages which describe a genuine revelation from God (the 'Father' or 'Spirit of God,' i.e. Elohim), of course the receiver of the revelation has had to convey it (e.g. write it down) in some human language, thus it may *seem* that God has spoken using human words. The actual wording is, in fact, the receivers *own* best interpretation of the message in *his* (the receiver's) *own* language. However, when God's

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division of languages, revelation transcends human communication without the use of speech or words.¹⁴³ To those who are blessed to be granted, revelation comes with no regard for linguistic or geographical barriers. Thus, the full realization of such an experience requires time and contemplation to be fully understood. Genuine Spiritual revelations always come through the Divine *Unspeakable Word* of God – the '*Small, Hushed Sound*'.¹⁴⁴ Anyone who believes that the Spirit of God (or Jesus) is speaking to them in *any 'human' language* is sadly in error – such experiences come from within one's own mind.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, such phenomena are not uncommon today both inside and outside our psychiatric hospitals. Thus, if it was true that Saul heard this voice speaking in Aramaic, he must certainly have been suffering from what is now called schizophrenia.¹⁴⁶

Messenger (i.e. the living Master, man-god, Yahweh = the Lord) speaks, he is actually living on Earth, and obviously speaks in a human tongue.

¹⁴³ "It is not in speech or language that the [Heavenly] Voice is heard! This Voice vibrates throughout all the Earth, and the Word reaches to the ends of the world. These are set within the Tabernacle of the [Heavenly] Sun." (PSA.19:3-4). "I (Ezekiel) heard the Sound... like the sound of rushing water, or the Voice of the Almighty." (EZEK.1:24). "The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far away as the outer court, like the Voice of God Almighty when He speaks." (EZEK.10:5).

¹⁴⁴ Or the "*still, small Voice*." See e.g. KJV of 1stKINGS 19:12. The Hebrew word translated here as "voice" (qol) has the primary meaning: "SOUND" or "RESONANCE." Note that sometimes the Divine Sound is described as being *quiet*, and sometimes as a loud *roar*. This is because, although it may seem loud to the receiver (it is heard within), it is inaudible to others. For a full explanation and description of the Divine 'Sound' of God, see above, p.96 ff.

¹⁴⁵ "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.'" (JER.23:16).

¹⁴⁶ If one is shocked by such a suggestion, then perhaps the following statistic might be useful. An estimated 1% (one percent) of the general population suffers from schizophrenia – yes, one in every one hundred people! Today, many people with serious mental problems are cared for

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A variety of symptoms characterize schizophrenia. The most prominent include symptoms of psychosis – such as delusions and hallucinations – as well as bizarre behaviour, and disorganized thinking and speech. Many people with schizophrenia do not recognize that their mental functioning is disturbed. Delusions are false beliefs, e.g. a person with schizophrenia may believe that he is the emperor of Rome, a Messiah, or an 'apostle' of Jesus, when he is not. People with schizophrenia may have delusions that others, such as the police or some opponents, are plotting against them or spying on them. They may also experience hallucinations (false sensory perceptions) in which they see or hear things that are not there. Auditory hallucinations, such as hearing voices, are especially common in schizophrenia. These hallucinations may include voices that continually comment on the person's life, or voices that command the person to do something. People with schizophrenia sometimes talk in rather incoherent ways, which suggests confused or disorganized thinking. In conversation or writing they may jump from topic to topic or string together loosely associated phrases. Another common characteristic of schizophrenia is social withdrawal. In addition, such people commonly have problems with anxiety and depression. Saul (or Paul), as we will later observe, clearly shows from his writings that he possesses most, if not all, of the above symptoms. In addition to these, he also shows strong symptoms of paranoia. Paranoia is a type of psychosis in which a person suffers from logically consistent delusions (fixed, false beliefs) of persecution and/or grandeur. Sigmund Freud postulated that paranoia is an intellectual disorder in which the primary symptom is extreme distrust of others; the paranoid person may believe that people are

in institutions, but in Biblical times these people wandered about the streets, many claiming to have received messages or visions from God.

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out to kill him or her. In addition, in paranoid schizophrenia, the patient may have hallucinations in which famous persons from history or mythology (e.g. Jesus or God) appear and communicate messages; this manifestation is related to the patient's delusion of grandeur.

It is clear from the New Testament that Saul had a very violent, intolerant, impulsive, domineering, and zealous temperament.¹⁴⁷ He had been hunting down and violently persecuting the disciples of Jesus – which seemed to give him much satisfaction. His attitude was rather like that of a modern day religious terrorist, who believes he kills *enemies of God* with Divine approval!¹⁴⁸ Now, on his way to Damascus, Paul seems to have experienced a vision (or a hallucination?) of his 'arch-enemy' Jesus talking to him. Saul, it seems, was immediately converted to Christianity. His subsequent career of preaching his newly found faith clearly shows, as we will see, yet another psychological trait – that of a *narcissistic personality disorder*. People suffering from this disorder have a grandiose sense of self-importance. They seek excessive admiration from others, and fantasize about unlimited success or power. They believe they are

¹⁴⁷ We will observe, as we continue our study, that Paul also exhibits a grandiose sense of self-importance; logically consistent delusions of both persecution and grandeur; an extreme distrust of others; beliefs that people are out to kill him; hallucinations in which Jesus communicates messages to him; a desire for excessive admiration from others; fantasies about having unlimited success and power; a belief that he is special, unique, and superior to others; and very fragile self-esteem. He also, on a couple of occasions, demonstrates long periods of social withdrawal.

¹⁴⁸ This evil belief has been taught by many religious leaders both past and present, e.g. many Catholic Popes – instigating various bloody crusades, inquisitions, and witch-hunts. Also, as recently as 1989, Iran's orthodox religious (Muslim) leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, issued a *fatwa* (edict) declaring that the British author of "*The Satanic Verses*", Salman Rushdie, be put to death (*in the name of Allah!*)!

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special, unique, or superior to others. However, they often have very fragile self-esteem.

We will now look at a few of the episodes, incidents, and reported words, teachings, and beliefs of Saul (Paul) contained in the New Testament, which show various inconsistencies, errors, and symptoms of serious mental illness. Unfortunately the only reports we have are from Saul himself (in his various letters), and the author of ACTS (who was a devoted supporter and disciple of Saul – probably Luke¹⁴⁹); thus it is a very one-sided account. This needs to be clearly understood and remembered as we read on.

Shortly after his conversion, Saul spent approximately three years in the northern Arabian desert near Damascus (GAL.1:17). This period is unusual because we are told absolutely nothing about why he was there or what he was doing.¹⁵⁰ He then returned to Damascus. There, we are told, Saul "grew more and more powerful" (ACTS 9:22). Saul angered the Jews in Damascus so much that they conspired to kill him (ACTS 9:23). They kept watch day and night at the city gates for Saul's entrance into or exit from the city. Apparently there was also an official warrant for his arrest from the governor of the city

¹⁴⁹ Luke was a Gentile physician living in Troas, a city on the coast of the Aegean Sea, where, perhaps, Saul first met him and converted him to Christianity. Luke accompanied Saul for a short time on Saul's second missionary journey (from Luke's home in Troas to Philippi, and later back to Troas). Most of what he wrote in ACTS is obviously from what Saul had reported to him. Luke clearly has a theological agenda in his book. For one thing, he wants to stress the legitimacy of the apostleship of Saul. He is also very selective in what incidents he chooses to write about. We must therefore understand that the story given is very biased towards Saul.

¹⁵⁰ This is Saul's first period of what might be considered "social withdrawal" (a symptom of schizophrenia).

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(2ndCOR.11:32).¹⁵¹ Eventually, however, he escapes. This account is just the first of many similar incidents in which Saul angers people, and then believes that they are planning to kill him. This belief occurs so often, as we will see, that it certainly seems to exhibit strong symptoms of paranoia. We must not forget that Saul's extensive journeys were always through Roman provinces, and, as he was a Roman citizen, he was always protected by law. Anyone threatening or attacking him would be harshly dealt with by the Roman authorities. Yet, again and again, throughout his travels, we are told of (his beliefs in) murderous schemes plotted against him, and his having to flee from town to town.

From Damascus he returned to Jerusalem, approximately three years after he had previously left with the intention of destroying all Christians. Part of Saul's goal of traveling to Jerusalem at this time was to meet with the original Apostles and discuss his theology with them – not to get their approval, but simply to share what he had been doing and thinking (see e.g. GAL.1:14-20; cf.2:2-6). His general attitude here clearly exhibits narcissistic tendencies – note how he states: "God, who set me (Saul) apart from birth... was pleased to reveal his Son in me." (GAL.1:15-16); and "For this is what the Lord has commanded: 'I have made you (Saul) a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (ACTS 13:47), i.e. placing himself above the original Apostles, and equating himself to Jesus and/or the Prophets Isaiah (cf. ISAIAH 49:6) and Jeremiah (cf. JER.1:5)!

¹⁵¹ If there was really a warrant for Paul's arrest issued by the governor of Damascus, it is hardly likely that any Jews there would have intervened and broken the law by murdering him, and thus risking their own lives – we must not forget that Paul was a Roman citizen and protected by Roman law. That he believed the Jews were conspiring to kill him might just be one of his many symptoms of Paranoia.

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We are told that Saul remained in Jerusalem for only fifteen days (GAL.1:18). While he was there he apparently moved freely about, preaching "*boldly in the name of the Lord*" (ACTS 9:28). But once again we are told that the Jews there wanted to 'kill' him. It is reported by the author of ACTS that when the Christian brothers in Jerusalem learned about the plot against Saul's life, they quickly took him to Caesarea, put him on a ship, and dispatched him to Tarsus in Cilicia, his birthplace (ACTS 9:30). It seems that the Jerusalem church wanted to get rid of this troublemaker as soon as possible. We must ask why they chose to send him to his home town of Tarsus (600 km across the sea), or was this Saul's choice? They could have sent him to Antioch, where there was a Christian community and where he would have been safe; but they may have wanted to eliminate his involvement with any Christian churches. However, Saul later claimed that his fleeing Jerusalem was by '*divine command*', for in his defense he speaks of having received a vision in the Jerusalem Temple that warned him to flee Jerusalem (ACTS 22:17-21). Claiming *divine guidance* (i.e. 'revelations' and/or 'visions' of Jesus) as the reason for (often embarrassing, strange, or contentious) actions and decisions becomes a habit with Saul, as we shall later observe. This episode illustrates strong tinges of '*hallucination*' (delusionary visions or, perhaps, plain lies?) and '*fantasies of unlimited success*' ("moving freely about and preaching boldly in the name of the Lord") – for Saul could not admit either that he had been forced to run away, or had been dismissed by the *mother church*! The next several years are known as Saul's "silent years," since Luke does not talk about them, and nor does Saul in his letters. Perhaps he needed time to reconsider his position and/or lick his wounded pride/ego, or perhaps this was simply another sign of his psychosis – his second long period of *social withdrawal*!

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The next time we hear of Saul is when Barnabas requested him to come and help out in Antioch. After a few years in this city, we are told that Barnabas and Saul were officially commissioned as missionaries by the Antioch church (c. AD 47) to go to other parts of the Roman world with the gospel (ACTS 13:1-3). They were thus sent off accompanied by a cousin of Barnabas named John Mark (ACTS 13:5; cf. COL.4:10).

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY – c. A.D. 47-48

Their first destination was Cyprus. The Roman proconsul of Cyprus was Sergius Paulus. Perhaps the preaching of Saul and Barnabas had created a commotion among the Jews of Cyprus, as it had already done in Damascus and Jerusalem (cf. ACTS 9:22-23, 28-29), and Sergius needed to hear for himself what was going on. So he summoned the missionaries into his presence. We are told, somewhat surprisingly, that Saul and Barnabas received a sympathetic hearing from the Roman official. But then a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus tried to persuade the proconsul that their preaching was false. So Saul (now called Paul) looked Bar-Jesus straight in the eye and, in an obvious fit of anger, said: "*You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.*" We are then told that Paul's curse immediately came true, and that Sergius Paulus was so impressed that *he became a believer!* (ACTS 13:8-11). It states in the Bible that Jesus, himself, often faced similar opposition, and used many harsh words against His opponents, but He never stooped so low as to physically harm or disable anyone – even for a short time! A true man of God will always use the power of Love and reason to overcome opponents! But here

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Paul claims that it is by *the hand of God* that he is pronouncing a curse of blindness on this sorcerer. If this episode is true, then it is *Paul* who is the evil sorcerer. If it is not true, then he is either a liar, or again showing symptoms of his psychosis i.e. *fantasies* about having unlimited success and power. It might be asked what kind of believer did the proconsul become – who admired such shows of sorcery? Paul, it seems, wanted so much to be admired, that his claims are often very excessive and/or delusionary.

It seems that Paul was never one to stay very long in the same place, so after a whirlwind trip through Cyprus, he, Barnabas, and Mark boarded a ship and headed for the coast of Asia Minor, landing at the port city of Perga.¹⁵² For some reason that the author of ACTS (presumably Luke) does not disclose, Mark left the others there and returned to Jerusalem.¹⁵³ Then Paul and Barnabas headed inland and arrived at Antioch in the province of Pisidia. The Jews here soon grew angry with Paul and Barnabas and put pressure on the city magistrates to do something about these troublemakers. The outcome was that Paul and Barnabas were thrown out of the city and moved on to other parts of Galatia (ACTS 13:50-51). Why John Mark deserted Paul we do not know for sure. However, we do know that Paul never wanted to travel with him again (ACTS 15:36-40). Perhaps some sort of personality clash? Perhaps Mark did not show Paul the kind of reverence, subservience, admiration or respect that he craved? Or maybe he had come to understand

¹⁵² It seems that Paul valued *quantity* over quality as far as *his* achievements were concerned. He wanted to outdo all other missionaries in numbers of converts and regions evangelised – no matter what the consequences. This may be due to his intense desire to be perceived as the greatest apostle – a desire perhaps driven by his narcissistic personality.

¹⁵³ This decision by Mark is significant, as will be seen later, i.e. at the planning stage of the second missionary journey.

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too well the truth about Paul?¹⁵⁴

The next city they visited was Iconium. As usual, Paul and Barnabas headed for the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath and were invited to speak. Their message was so effective that a large number of Jews and Gentiles believed. They spent a considerable amount of time in this city, preaching and performing miraculous signs and wonders (ACTS 14:1-3). But, once again, some of the Jews and Gentiles there became angry with what Paul and Barnabas were doing. Together they formed a plot "to mistreat and stone them" (ACTS 14:5). The two missionaries, we are told, found out about what was being planned, so they immediately fled to Lystra (ACTS 14:6). In this tale we are first told of Paul's great success in this city, but then the success somehow turns to anger, and then the routine (imaginary?) plotting to harm him, and finally the escape. Do we have in this episode a combination of (i) fantasies about having unlimited success and power, (ii) delusions of both persecution and grandeur, and (iii) a belief that people are out to kill him??? These are classic symptoms of psychosis, and recur over and over throughout Paul's life!

After arriving in Lystra we are told that Paul preached in the marketplace. There he saw a crippled man and, by the power of Jesus, apparently healed him.¹⁵⁵ When the

¹⁵⁴ This is the same Mark who is presumed to have written the Gospel of that name. His Gospel is generally accepted as being the earliest (written c. AD 65-70), and therefore, perhaps, the most authoritative. It is important to note that the original ending of his Gospel is missing (see above, p.14 note 14). Could the reason be that he actually wrote something derogatory about Paul, e.g. included a warning against false apostles like Paul who were forming their own churches, and teaching a different gospel to that of Jesus? This would obviously be expunged from Mark's Gospel by the later Roman (Paulist / orthodox) church.

¹⁵⁵ If this story is true, then it seems that Paul was merely using occult powers to win disciples (cf ACTS 8:9-11; & see above, p.67 ff). We must understand that these stories were either written by Paul himself, or

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residents of Lystra saw this, they excitedly felt that the gods had come down to visit them in human form. Thus, the population decided, the only proper response was to offer sacrifices to them. When Paul realized what was happening, he shouted for the Lystrans to stop. Only with difficulty were they able to persuade the people to stop their sacrificing. Then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived in Lystra and managed to convince the crowd that Paul and Barnabas were 'dangerous' men. Thus, they stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. He recovered, however, and the very next day left for Derbe (ACTS 14:8-20). Well, this is a truly amazing story! One minute the Gentile population are worshipping Paul as a god because he had performed a miracle, the next minute they are listening to mere hearsay from some visiting Jews telling them that Paul and Barnabas were 'dangerous' men. Even more amazing is the outcome – without any proof, they actually stone Paul to death (as they thought).¹⁵⁶ But most amazing of all is the speed in which he recovers from *near death*, so that he was able to travel on the very next day! Once more we have to decide if this story is genuine, plain lies, or just another symptom of Paul's mental illness.¹⁵⁷

After visiting a few more cities they eventually returned to

related by him to his faithful disciple Luke (the author of ACTS) who was not a witness to many of the reported incidents. In this particular case only Barnabas was with Paul, and by the time of this writing (c. AD 64, almost twenty years later) he had long since quarrelled and separated from Paul, and may well have by then died of old age. Thus, after such a time period, there were few who could refute Paul's many claims.

¹⁵⁶ It is highly unlikely that the residents could have stoned anyone without the authorities knowing. Moreover, Paul, a Roman citizen, would only have had to appeal to the governor for justice!

¹⁵⁷ In a letter later written to the Galatians Paul states: "Let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus." (GAL.6:17). It seems here as if Paul is trying to equate some wounds he has received with those of Jesus – a very strange and narcissistic thing to do – also his demand that *no one cause him trouble!*

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the church that had sent them out, the church in Antioch. When they arrived there, they reported all the things that God had done through them in Cyprus and Galatia. For the next year or so, they remained in Antioch and ministered to the church in that city (ACTS 14:27-28).

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL – c. A.D. 49

It is clear that, in general, Jews were unhappy when a rabbi (as Paul was) was willing to accept fully, as God's people, those who did not follow God's Law. The anger over this issue had became so intense at times that he and Barnabas had to flee for their lives on several occasions already (ACTS 13:42-51; 14:1-7, 19). In response to the Jews' "*abuse and blasphemy*", Paul and Barnabas began to assert *their* new policy – "*To the Jews first, but also to the Gentiles*" – a policy that had begun with the conversion of Sergius Paulus. This policy of preaching first to Jews and then to Gentiles shows another error in Paul's reasoning – to be advocating favouritism, Jews before Gentiles – not, in truth, a policy which could have come from God (who surely views *all* humans as equals – His children)! After Paul's first missionary journey, a new facet emerged, which was also linked with the issue over following God's Law. There were many Jewish-*Christians* who, likewise, did not support what was going on in the churches Paul had organized. A fierce argument over this issue first surfaced in the church of Antioch in Syria. Some there supported Paul, especially after they heard what had been accomplished (according to Paul's, perhaps *exaggerated*, stories) on his first missionary journey. But some men came from Judea to Antioch and insisted that Paul had it all wrong! This was a very serious threat to the church for it now faced the possibility that its unity might rupture and that two churches might develop – a Jewish-Christian

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church and a Gentile-Christian church.¹⁵⁸ Apparently the debate with the Judean visitors to the church in Antioch could not be resolved. Neither Paul nor the Judeans would give in to the thinking of the other side (ACTS 15:2; GAL.2:5). Therefore the church leaders in Antioch felt that they needed the input of the original Apostles in Jerusalem to resolve this issue. After all, these Apostles had been personally chosen as leaders by Jesus during His life on Earth! So Paul and Barnabas were sent to meet with them in Jerusalem. Immediately after they arrived in Jerusalem, they sought a "*private meeting*" with the leaders – the Apostles Peter, John (son of Zebedee), and James (the Lord's brother and head of the church) (GAL.2:2, 8 & 9; cf. ACTS 15:4). From this private meeting we hear only *Paul's version* of the outcome¹⁵⁹ i.e. in ACTS (written by Paul's disciple – Luke) and in Paul's own letters. Paul's letter to the Galatians states: "I (Paul) went (to Jerusalem) in response to a revelation and set before them (the original Apostles) the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who 'seemed' to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.¹⁶⁰ Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because

¹⁵⁸ This did, in fact, eventually happen, but the Jewish-Christian Church was eventually discarded, overrun, and declared heretical by the fast growing 'Paulist' Gentile Churches (later to be controlled by Rome) – whose theology eventually became regarded as orthodox!

¹⁵⁹ It may be a little cynical to think that perhaps Paul had a motive in requesting a private meeting – to enable him to later report only his version of the outcome! In fact, Paul's version is all we have!

¹⁶⁰ Indeed, if this was Paul's reason for meeting with the Apostles – *for fear that he was acting* (teaching) *in vain* – then what must be said for his supposed revelations from God? This clearly reveals that Paul was not altogether satisfied with the soundness of his teaching, and thus needed to consult with the true Apostles. So much, then, for his claims of direct revelation from God!

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some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy¹⁶¹ on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.(?) As for those who 'seemed to be important' – whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance – those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (?), just as Peter had been to the Jews (?). For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me (?). They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the (Paul's) gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" (GAL.2:1-14). Firstly, it is reported in ACTS that Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem as the result of a decision by the leaders in Antioch (ACTS 15:2); yet here Paul says it was "in response to a revelation." Undoubtedly, he claims that it

¹⁶¹ People with schizophrenia often have delusions that others are plotting against them or 'spying' on them.

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was by 'revelation' because, due to his grandiose sense of self-importance, he wished to assert that at no time was he under the authority of anyone else! The term "false brothers" (used here and in 2ndCOR.11:26) clearly defines anyone who does not agree with *Paul's* theology; and the reference to them "spying" on him demonstrates a symptom of his paranoia! Note also Paul's opinion (and attitude) that any advantages which the original apostles might have had from knowing the incarnate Jesus was of no importance to him, and could add nothing to his message! Three times in this chapter (GAL.2:2, 6, & 9) Paul refers to the three major figures at Jerusalem in a very unusual way. The persons in question are the Apostles James, Peter, and John, described as "those who seemed to be leaders," "those who seemed to be important," and "those reputed to be pillars." Why this deferential way of referring to them? This display of disparagement demonstrates that Paul is very unhappy and angry with these three Apostles. The very repetition of the phrase seems ominous. Furthermore, each occurrence of the phrase seems to grow stronger with each repetition. The story of Peter's conduct at Antioch (GAL.2:11-14) lends credence to the feeling that Paul is disappointed and angry with the outcome of the meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem church. In other words, the delicate situation lying behind these verses explains the movement of Paul's thought. Paul cannot reconcile, on the one hand, his desire for excessive admiration from others, his grandiose sense of self-importance, his belief that he is superior to others, his fragile self-esteem, and his belief (in his hallucinations) that Jesus communicates messages to him, with, on the other hand, the building opposition to him and his theology from so many (all?) members of the Jerusalem church (especially the genuine Apostles appointed by Jesus) – everyone seems to be turning against him! It may be seen from this passage that Paul has admitted the

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position and authority of the Jerusalem Apostles *without diminishing his own authority in the slightest*. Eventually, Paul will even declare in his letter to the Galatians that the outcome between himself and the Apostles was *cordial* (GAL.2:9), "James, Peter and John... gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship!"! The letter from the leaders in Jerusalem, summarizing the official conclusions of this meeting with Paul, which is reproduced in ACTS 15:23-29, is quite frankly spurious¹⁶² – probably an invention of Paul's, who reported it to Luke, who was his disciple, and the presumed author of ACTS. The whole episode smells of lies and deception on Paul's part. No genuine teachers of Truth would segregate the evangelizing of Gentiles and Jews. Although we do not know the precise details, there are many traditions of the various Apostles traveling far and wide, to all nations e.g. Thomas is said to have gone as far as India, etc. It is also reported in the gospels that: "Jesus said to them (the Apostles), 'Go into the entire world and preach the good news to all creation.' (MARK 16:15). "Go and make disciples of all nations" (MATT.28:19), and "... to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (LUKE 24:47). Is it

¹⁶² Here is Paul's version of the letter, according to the author of ACTS: "We (the Jerusalem Apostles) *have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul – men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*" If this letter was genuine, then why did Paul show such contempt, and indeed, such obvious scorn for the Leaders in Jerusalem (GAL.2:1-14)? Was it jealousy, or something more? There is nothing in this letter to indicate that they disagreed with Paul's theology – yet they obviously did disagree, as we will later see. Also, if the requirements contained in this letter were all that the Holy Spirit and the Apostles considered necessary, why did the dispute continue?

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likely then, nay, even possible that Paul's account of the outcome of this meeting is true – that the leaders in Jerusalem **saw that Paul** (rather than they) **had been entrusted by God with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles?** One final remark in concluding this episode is on Paul's criticism of Peter. He accuses Peter of being a hypocrite for behaving differently in the presence of Jewish delegates sent by James (e.g. in observing the Jewish dietary laws) to the way he normally behaved in the presence of the Gentile believers in Antioch. However Paul himself admits to doing the very same thing – "*To the Jews I (Paul) became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law, so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law (i.e. Gentiles) I became like one not having the law, so as to win those not having the law.*" (1stCOR.9:20-21). Is Paul so conceited that he cannot even recognize his own hypocrisy? Or perhaps it is his psychosis that blinds him.

After the Jerusalem meeting Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and continued their evangelizing work. No one knows for sure all the details, but it was during this time that another confrontation took place, this time between Paul and Barnabas. When Paul proposed leaving Antioch and visiting the churches formed on their previous missionary trip, Barnabas wanted to take Mark along once more. However Paul, we are told, felt this would be a hindrance to him, for Mark had been a "quitter" (ACTS 15:36-39; cf. ACTS 13:13). "*They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.*" (ACTS 15:39-40). We do not truly know why Paul refused to take Mark. It could not have been solely for the reason given, i.e. that Mark had merely abandoned them on the previous mission – this would surely not be cause enough

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for Paul to refuse a second chance, especially if such a refusal would destroy his long-standing relationship with Barnabas!. There was something much more important and profound! Could it be that Mark saw through Paul – to his true nature? Or perhaps Mark simply did not respect or esteem him enough to elate his grandiose sense of self-importance, or one of the many other cravings of his mental condition? Another possibility is that Mark would be considered a threat to Paul's work, as he might 'spy' and report undesirable facts to the Jerusalem Apostles about his teachings (see above, p.206 note 154). There is also a very strange note concerning Mark in Paul's letter to the Colossians which states: "You have received instructions about him (Mark); *if he comes to you, welcome him.*" (COL.4:10). What were these *instructions* about Mark? Were they a warning from Paul to beware of him as a spy, but to humour him with an outward show of kindness and respect? We can only speculate about such things, but when we add all the circumstantial evidence together a very strong case emerges for Paul's psychosis.

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY – c. AD. 49-51

The first thing Paul and Silas (his new companion) did as they began their journey was to visit other Christian communities in Syria and Cilicia. Then they traveled to Derbe and then Lystra (ACTS 16:1; cf. 14:8-20). "*He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*" (ACTS 16:1-3). Why, after the heated argument in Jerusalem, would Paul circumcise Timothy? Some commentators even question whether Paul actually did this. Others say he rejected any

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imposition of circumcision and the Jewish law only upon Gentile converts (e.g., Titus; see Gal 2:1-5), and urged all converts to express and practice their Christian faith through the cultural traditions they had inherited (cf. 1stCOR.7:17-24). As Timothy was a Jew in the eyes of the Jewish world, Paul apparently considered it both proper and expedient to circumcise him. If this is true then it not only shows Paul to be a false teacher, but also contradicts his other statements that *there is no difference between Jew and Gentile* (ROM.10:12) and *If a man was uncircumcised when he was called, he should not be circumcised.* (1stCOR.7:18). There is no definitive answer to why Paul changes his mind and attitude so often over various teachings. However, it is very clear that his claim, that he received his message and instructions through Divine revelation from God, is false – for if that were the case, there would be no ambiguity or any changes in his teaching.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy eventually reached Antioch of Pisidia. They decided to continue traveling east, heading toward Ephesus. But for some unknown reason, the 'Holy Spirit' told them not to preach the Word of God in that area! (ACTS 16:6). Thus they headed north, thinking that perhaps they might preach the good news in Mysia and Bithynia. But again the 'Spirit of Jesus' would not allow them to do that! (ACTS 16:7). It is possible that Paul's companions wished to go to these areas, but Paul did not. Perhaps he again believed that people were out to kill him! So, in order to get his own way without argument, he may simply have claimed to have had a divine vision. Alternatively, Paul may actually have experienced another hallucination in which he believed that Jesus had communicated with him. Anyway, whatever the truth of the matter, they kept heading north until they arrived in Troas, a city on the coast of the Aegean Sea, near the Dardanelles.

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One night Paul again received a vision in which he saw a man from Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (ACTS 16:9). Once again, is Paul hallucinating, or perhaps lying about having visions in order to get his own way and fulfill his own desires? Apparently Paul, Silas, and Timothy discussed the vision and they all agreed that it had come from the Lord (how could they know?) and that *the Lord* (or Paul?) wanted them to go farther west. So they sailed to Neapolis. Paul then decided (no claim of a vision this time?) to head for Philippi, the major city in that area. Another person accompanied them on their journey – Luke, a doctor (cf. COL.4:14) who had a practice in Troas (the apparent author of LUKE and ACTS). After experiencing more problems in Philippi, they headed to Thessalonica. Paul probably stayed in Thessalonica for several months, most likely using the house of a believer named Jason as the meeting place (ACTS 17:7). During his stay, Paul received monetary gifts ("again and again") from the church he had established in Philippi (PHIL.4:15-18). But, once again, trouble eventually brewed and Paul was kicked out of town. So Paul and Silas left Thessalonica and went to Berea. The Jews here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica. They were willing to listen to Paul as he preached and willing to examine the Scriptures to see if what he was preaching was really true (ACTS 17:10-11). As a result, many Jews and many Gentiles became believers. Somehow word arrived back in Thessalonica that Paul and his company were preaching and gaining converts in Berea. The Jews of Thessalonica, therefore, sent a delegation to Berea to stir up trouble. Rather than wait until things got out of hand again, Paul left Berea immediately. But he departed alone, leaving Silas and Timothy behind; they were to join him in Achaia as soon as possible. Once again we are told an exaggerated story of how well things are going in

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Berea – *many* Jews and *many* Gentile believers – only to be turned around by a few troublemakers from another town!? Here, though, Paul does not even wait to be thrown out of town – he runs before any trouble starts! This is not simply a cowardly ending, it does not make sense. Was it extreme paranoia which caused him to run? Why didn't he, as a Roman citizen, appealed to the authorities for protection; and how was it that Silas and Timothy could remain there without a problem? Once again there are many unanswered and strange ambiguities in the reported story – not something that God would be happy to call truth.

Paul then went to Athens and stayed for some time, but after fruitless attempts at teaching there he decided to leave and move on to Corinth. When Paul left Athens, he was alone and discouraged. In Corinth, the capital of Achaia, he arrived "in weakness and fear, and much trembling" (1stCOR.2:3). He decided that in this city his message would be nothing more than "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1stCOR. 2:2). Paul linked up in Corinth with a Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla and stayed at their house (ACTS 18:1-3). Things were going well in Corinth, but in the back of Paul's mind was always the possibility of persecution, and he was mentally preparing himself to have to leave. But one night the Lord spoke to him in a dream and assured him that his experiences in Macedonia were not going to be repeated in Achaia. God had many people in that city whom Paul was to reach. Paul's total stay in Corinth was a year and a half – the longest he had been in one city up to that time (ACTS 18:9-11).

While Paul was in Corinth, both Timothy and Silas returned from their visits to Philippi and Thessalonica. They brought with them more money collected from the church in Philippi (cf. PHIL.4:16-17) – enough so that Paul was able to devote all his time to preaching and

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evangelism (ACTS 18:5). Timothy reported how well the church in Thessalonica was doing (1stTHESS.3:6-10). But there were also problems in Thessalonica. Some of his opponents were trying to discredit Paul, charging him with preaching for profit¹⁶³ and running away at the slightest hint of trouble. Paul reminded the Thessalonians how he had worked for his living expenses and how intensely he cared about them (1stTHESS.2): "You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you (Paul must have been accused of these things!). We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed (another accusation?) – God is our witness. We were not

¹⁶³ Such accusations against Paul were not uncommon: "This is my (Paul's) defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we (Paul and his companions) have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas (Peter)? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.' Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." (1stCOR.9:3-14).

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looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else (another accusation?). As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed.¹⁶⁴ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children (such a patronizing attitude!), encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God (?), which is at work in you who believe."

The Thessalonians had theological questions as well. Some of them had died, and they wondered if these Christians had therefore lost their chance of going to be with Jesus when he returned to Earth. Paul answered these questions by teaching his doctrine of the resurrection (1stTHESS.4:13-5:10): "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have

¹⁶⁴ No sign of any humility here – only a belief that he is, perhaps, equal to Jesus. Paul clearly believed that he was 'special, unique, and superior to others'!

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fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

This belief that the experience of Heaven is a *future* event that will be experienced by all the faithful, whether physically dead or alive, at one and the same time, is totally wrong (see e.g. above, p.68). Paul states that his teaching is *according to the Lord's own word*. However there is no record of Jesus or any other prophet teaching this anywhere. Similarities between 1stTHESS.4:15-17 and the gospel accounts include a "trumpet" (MATT.24:31), a "resurrection" (JOHN 11:25-26), and a "gathering of the elect" (MATT.21:31). Yet dissimilarities between it and the canonical sayings of Jesus far outweigh the resemblances. For example, (i) in Matthew the Son of Man is coming on the clouds, in 1stThessalonians ascending believers are in them; (ii) in the former the angels gather, in the latter the Son does so personally; (iii) in the former nothing is said about resurrection, while in the latter this is the main theme; (iv) the former records nothing about the order of ascent, which is the principal lesson here in 1stThessalonians. Distinctions between this and the Johannine passages are just as pronounced. The best solution is to see "the Lord's own word" as a direct revelation to Paul himself, i.e. another hallucination! If it were not an hallucination, how could it differ from the accounts given in the other gospels – unless the other gospel writers were hallucinating, or just reporting untrue stories?

The letter was brought to Thessalonica, perhaps by Timothy. He reported back to Paul that new problems had developed. Eschatological fervor for the return of Jesus

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was reaching an all-time high, and some people had even quit work to wait for the event (2ndTHESS.3:6-12). Moreover, some were claiming that the Day of the Lord had already come (2ndTHESS.2:1-2). The apostle addressed both these issues in his second letter to that church. Also while Paul was in Corinth, someone brought him word that many in the churches of Galatia were being influenced by the Judeans, becoming convinced that true Christians had to obey the full Law of Moses (or God?) (GAL.1:6-7; 3:1-5). Paul therefore wrote to them a very impassioned letter (the letter to Galatians), in which he emphasized his doctrine that salvation is by grace alone through faith and that believers have freedom from the Law in Christ.

In the spring of A.D. 51, Paul decided to leave Corinth and return to his home church, Antioch. ACTS 18:22 reads: "*When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.*" This "going up" and "going down" almost certainly refers to a quick visit Paul made to the church in Jerusalem. Undoubtedly, as he had done after his first missionary journey, he reported on the success of his recent trip. Although Luke does not talk about this in ACTS, it is obvious that Paul knew that the issue over the relationship of Christians to the (Jewish) Law had not been resolved through the previous Council in Jerusalem. In fact, a "backlash" was occurring, as Paul had already discovered through the reports he heard about the churches in Galatia. Paul wanted to do something to convince the believers in Judea that the Gentile believers were sincere, and which would also make the Gentiles feel they were one with the Jewish-Christians. He remembered that some years earlier, the gift from Antioch to Jerusalem during the time of famine had been much appreciated (ACTS 11:27-30). It was, therefore, probably during this time that Paul decided to take a collection among his Gentile churches

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and to bring it to Jerusalem for the benefit of the poor among the saints there. In that way he hoped to foster a greater spirit of unity – or, one might say, use money to gain their respect and acceptance (cf. ROM.15:25-27). With this in mind, Paul left Jerusalem for the three-hundred-mile trip to Antioch (ACTS 18:22). Money and gifts, however, are not the solution to any Spiritual problem – and the true nature of this problem was definitely Spiritual, although this was not understood by Paul (as evidenced in his letters) or his disciple, Luke (the author of ACTS). This was not, in reality, about mundane laws or religious traditions (e.g. circumcision, etc.) but the *Eternal Spiritual LAW of God*. As this True Eternal Law has already been explained thoroughly in the preceding chapters of this study, it is not necessary to repeat here. It is enough to comprehend that Paul's understanding of Truth is sadly lacking – thinking he can purchase respect and acceptance, or "unity" with mere worldly gifts. It is clear from this demonstration of Spiritual ignorance that Paul's various visions and revelations could not have been from God, but rather from his own sick mind.

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY – c. AD 52-57

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul decided to return to Asia and Europe. In the major cities through which he traveled were churches he had started. One wonders, of course, what sort of reception he received in the Galatian churches, seeing that he had written his stinging letter to them only a year and a half earlier (even calling them "you foolish Galatians," GAL.3:1). Paul's mental illness was the cause of so much controversy, and he refused to listen to reason when his opinions, his teaching, and his churches were at stake. "Even if... an angel from Heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we (i.e. Paul) preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (GAL.1:6-9). Regardless of his reception, he had one main purpose on his mind, and that was doing

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what he believed would diminish the rift that existed between him and the mother church in Jerusalem, i.e. lavishing money on them! He therefore 'ordered' the Christians in Galatia to take up weekly offerings for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (1stCOR.16:1-2). This was his general message: "Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." (i.e. the money would be ready and waiting). What happened to the money they collected in Galatia, and when and how (or even if) it was ever brought to Jerusalem, we are never told. Paul then continued west to Ephesus.

During Paul's absence from the region, trouble began to develop in Corinth. After Paul and his company left, other teachers settled there who disagreed with the teaching Paul had been giving. Perhaps they were representatives of the genuine Apostles in Jerusalem, seeing that a certain segment of the church in Corinth eventually aligned themselves with what they considered to be the teachings of Peter (1stCOR.1:12). Word must have come to Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus about this development in Corinth, so they encouraged Apollos to go there and see what he could do to help bring the faith of the Corinthians back in line with Paul's teaching.

Paul taught in Ephesus for more than two years (ACTS 19:8, 10). His ministry was more than just preaching, however, he is said to have also performed many miracles and exorcisms. In some cases, people even used handkerchiefs and aprons which had been in contact with Paul, in order to cure illnesses! (ACTS 19:12). As is apparent from examples such as Bar-Jesus in Cyprus, and Simon the sorcerer in Samaria (ACTS 8:9), many

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were known throughout the ancient world for their occult powers, and here we see that Paul was also practicing similar *magic or sorcery*. There is also the story of Sceva, who was practicing similar feats of sorcery as Paul. When he saw Paul using the name "Jesus" to cast out demons, he decided to add this "magic name" (Jesus) to his list of spells. However, when he tried to use it to cast out an evil spirit from a man (ACTS 19:13), the evil spirit replied, "*Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?*" We are then told that the demon-possessed man single-handedly overpowered the seven sons of Sceva, and "*they ran out of the house, naked and bleeding*" (ACTS 19:15-16). Such stories were popular among uneducated people in ancient times. Whatever one wishes to believe about this incident, it is plain that there were many similar accounts reported outside of Christianity i.e. pagan religions were doing precisely the same things.

While Paul was in Ephesus, he heard a report from Corinth about a problem they were having with maintaining appropriate Christian standards of sexual morality. Paul, therefore, felt it necessary to write a letter to the Christians in Corinth (a letter we no longer have), in which he warned them "not to associate with sexually immoral people" (1stCOR.5:9). Many in the church reacted negatively to this letter: "How can we do business in this city," they apparently asked, "if we have to avoid all contact with people whose morals standards are not what Paul thinks they should be?" (cf. 1stCOR.5:10). When Paul heard this, he corrected himself in his second letter to the Corinthians (our 1stCorinthians), in which he clarified himself: They were not to associate with any 'fellow believer' who was living a sexually immoral life, see 1stCOR.5:11). Well, this is indeed a strange teaching – Christians were allowed to associate with non-believers who behaved immorally, but they were not allowed to associate with fellow believers who acted in the same

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way? Sometime later Paul received a letter from the believers in Corinth, in which the leaders asked his advice on several issues. In his reply he also instructed the Corinthians to participate in the collection he was taking for the saints in Jerusalem (1stCOR.16:1-4).

Soon, however, the situation in Corinth took a dramatic turn for the worse. Some new people arrived in the city who were even stronger in their opposition to Paul than were the "parties" that precipitated his extended discussion of the divisions in 1stCorinthians 1-4. These people must have claimed apostolic authority, since Paul calls them "*super-apostles*," and, because they did not agree with his theology, "*false apostles*." (2ndCOR.11:5, 13). They did not merely attack Paul's ideas; they attacked Paul himself: "His (Paul's) letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." (2ndCOR.10:10). Paul, therefore, changed his travel plans. Instead of going to Macedonia (cf. 1stCOR.16:5-6), he made a hasty trip directly across the Aegean Sea to Corinth, fully determined to bring the situation under control. But he failed, for he calls that visit to the Corinthian church a "painful visit" (2ndCOR.2:1; cf. 12:14; 13:1). So Paul quickly returned to Ephesus, a disappointed and angry man. In response, he fired off to them a letter that he "wrote ... out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2ndCOR.2:4), and which "hurt" them (2ndCOR.7:8; cf. v 12). It seems likely that much, if not all, of this letter has been preserved as 2ndCorinthians 10:1-13:10. In this letter Paul strongly asserted his authority as an apostle (even calling himself a "fool" for writing as he did; cf. 2ndCOR.11:16-19), and he openly expressed his fury at being challenged. He pulled out all the stops against his opponents, comparing them to Satan, who "masquerades as an angel of light" (2ndCOR.11:14). But not even a letter was enough. Paul also needed a personal representative to contend for his

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case in Corinth. Timothy did not seem to have had much success on his earlier mission; perhaps he was too timid (cf. 1stTIM.4:12; 2ndTIM.1:7). Thus, Paul chose Titus, who seems to have been much more diplomatic in dealing with conflict. Titus probably took along the "severe letter" as he left Ephesus for Corinth. He was also given instructions to do what he could to keep his collection for the saints in Jerusalem moving (cf. 2 COR.8:6). Paul's desire to gain respect from the mother Church in Jerusalem by means of gifts of money was always a top priority for him, even when so many more important problems were looming in the communities he had started! This is clearly another manifestation of his *desire for excessive admiration from others* – especially from the original Apostles in Jerusalem.

Paul continued to minister in Ephesus as Titus left for Corinth. Although Luke does not talk about it in ACTS, strong opposition developed against Paul in that city – more likely from the civil authorities than from the Jews. We know from ACTS 19:23-41 that the lucrative religious shrine business was suffering in Ephesus because of the spread of Christianity. Demetrius and his silversmith guild therefore started a riot, perhaps even intending to lynch Paul. That may be why the Asiarchs (the Roman officials in charge of Ephesus) suggested to Paul not to go into the amphitheater, where a mass of devotees to Artemis were shouting for two hours straight, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (ACTS 19:28-34). Sometime later, however, hardships became so severe for Paul again that he "despaired even of life"; he "felt the sentence of death" (2ndCOR.1:8-9). It may be that Paul was imprisoned for some time in Ephesus, during which time he suffered much (2ndCOR.1:4-7).

There seems to have been one bright spot during this time, however. Paul received a visit from Epaphroditus, a

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representative of the church in Philippi (PHIL.2:25-30). This man brought money from the Philippian church for Paul (PHIL.4:10-18). Perhaps the letter of Philippians gives us further insight concerning Paul and his opponents in Corinth. Paul says that they preached Christ "out of envy and rivalry," thinking they could make things even more difficult for the imprisoned Paul (PHIL.1:15-17). Someone who suffers from a narcissistic personality disorder will imagine anyone who shows opposition to their beliefs or actions does so "out of envy and rivalry." This period was a very unhappy time in the life of Paul. After the riot in Ephesus and after his release from prison there, Paul decided that it was once again time for him to leave.

Paul then decided to go to Troas. The previous time Paul was there, he had received the vision of the man from Macedonia, begging him to come over and help them. Thus, he did not preach in Troas. Now he was in Troas again, but Paul was under such stress regarding the situation in Corinth that he found it impossible to concentrate on any mission work. Before he could resume his preaching, he felt he had to have word back from Titus concerning the Corinthians (2ndCOR.2:12-13). Thus, once again, Paul left Troas and headed for Macedonia. But things did not go well there either: "This body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn – conflicts on the outside, fears within" (2ndCOR.7:5). Finally, however, Titus arrived in Macedonia, where he brought word that he had been able to stabilize the situation in Corinth. The Christians there were now longing for Paul and were deeply sorry for what had transpired between them (2ndCOR.7:6-7). Paul was elated! As a result, he wrote his fourth letter to the Corinthian church (2ndCOR.1-8 [or 9]), in which he thanked God for what had transpired and for gifts God had given him to minister the new covenant to them

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(2ndCOR.2:14-6:2). At the same time, Paul knew that the money collection had probably been put on hold during the time of tension between him and the Corinthians. Therefore he appended 2ndCorinthians 8-9 to his letter, in which he sought to motivate both the Corinthians and the Achaians generally to continue gathering money for the saints in Jerusalem.

Now Paul was once again able to preach the gospel. After completing a whirlwind evangelism tour he made a final trip through Macedonia to pick up the money which had been collected for the Christians in Judea, and he was thrilled at the results. Even though many of the Macedonians were poor, the Christians in that area had been extremely generous in their giving and felt sorry only that they were unable to give more (2ndCOR.8:1-5).

Perhaps because of the impending weather, Paul decided to spend the three winter months in the warmer climate of Corinth (ACTS 20:2; cf. v.6). Accompanying him were a number of fellow Christians from both Macedonia and Asia (ACTS 20:4-5; cf. 2 COR.9:4); they would assist him in bringing the collection money to Jerusalem. Paul decided to send his Asian companions on ahead to Corinth in order to expedite the collection of money there. He wanted to avoid two situations. One was that his repeated and confident boast to the Macedonians about the Corinthians' "eagerness" and readiness to give money would turn out to be without foundation upon his arrival. The other was that when his companions from Macedonia arrived at Corinth with Paul (2ndCOR.12:11: 13:1-2), the Corinthians would still be unprepared, and this would greatly embarrass him. To make certain that neither of these predicaments arose, Paul "thought it necessary to urge the brothers" to prepare for his coming to Corinth by supervising final arrangements for the collection there. He reminds the Corinthians of their earlier commitment ("the

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generous gift you had promised"). By a prompt response when the brothers arrived, they would be fulfilling an obligation they had promised, and would ensure that the gift was not "grudgingly given."

During those three months spent in Corinth, Paul began to look to the future again. Since his goal had always been to preach where no one else was preaching (ROM.15:20-21), he decided that after his quick trip to Jerusalem to deliver the collection, his next mission field would be Spain (ROM.15:24-25, 28). Why was Paul always so eager to run off and evangelize new areas – especially as his current congregations were always experiencing so many difficulties? Perhaps one or more of the following might answer this question: (i) He would have complete autonomy to preach his version of Christ among people who had previously heard nothing. (ii) He could wallow in his grandiose sense of self-importance without hindrance from other Christian teachers. (iii) He could fulfil his desire for excessive admiration from others without competition. (iv) He could also fulfil his fantasies about having unlimited success or power by evangelising such far-reaching places. This would also fulfil his belief that he is special, unique, and superior to others.

In spring of A.D. 57, Paul decided to go back to Jerusalem, bringing with him the money he had been collecting in Macedonia and Achaia (Rom 15:26). Nothing is mentioned about the money which had been collected in Galatia? He found a ship heading for Syria, but discovered (or imagined?) a plot of the Jews (perhaps to steal the money?) just before embarking. Consequently, he quickly changed his travel plans and headed by land back through Macedonia (ACTS 20:3). Several of those accompanying Paul went on ahead to Troas while he spent the Passover in Philippi (ACTS 20:4-6). When he left Philippi by boat for Troas, Luke now also accompanied

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him. They embarked on a ship at Troas, but Paul once again decided to go overland, this time to Assos, about fifteen miles south. He boarded the ship there. They sailed along the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea, stopping at various places. He stopped at Miletus, about thirty miles south of Ephesus. The group had to spend a couple of days there, so Paul sent word to the elders of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus so he could see them one more time (ACTS 20:17). Luke records Paul's farewell speech to them (ACTS 20:18-35). For some reason, Paul felt he would never see them again. At Miletus, Paul and his friends boarded the ship again and kept on heading south, stopping at various points. At Patara they found a different ship, headed directly to Tyre. After spending seven days in Tyre with the Christians there, they got back on the ship and eventually landed at Caesarea, where they stayed a number of days with Philip (ACTS 21:1-8). Throughout this journey, people kept warning Paul not to go to Jerusalem (ACTS 21:4, 10-14). But he was determined to present his gift in person to the Christian authorities in the holy city, so he refused to heed these warnings. Arrangements were made for Paul and those with him to stay at the house of Mnason, an elderly Cypriot believer living in Jerusalem (ACTS 21:15-16). Paul's third missionary journey was now over.

As soon as Paul arrived in Jerusalem (AD 56 or 57), he and his friends attended a meeting of their Christian brothers and sisters in that city (ACTS 21:17). At that time he presented to the church the generous monetary gift he had been carrying, which had been donated by his Gentile churches (cf. ACTS 24:17). We are told that the believers in Jerusalem were deeply touched by that symbol of Christian unity, and they received Paul and his companions warmly (ACTS 21:17). The next day Paul and his group had an appointment with the leaders of the church in the holy city – James and the elders. Paul

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"reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry" (ACTS 21:19). Again we are told that these leaders responded by praising God for the success of Paul's mission. But the leaders knew that suspicions about Paul remained. Since the time of his last visit to Jerusalem, thousands of Jews in Judea had come to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, many of whom remained true to the Law of God. Rumors among them persisted that Paul was teaching his converts, including Jews, to ignore the Law (notably, the practice of circumcision), and that he himself no longer obeyed its requirements (ACTS 21:20-21). Bringing a gift to Jerusalem, no matter how large, was not going to remove concern on this issue. We are then told that James suggested a form of deception for Paul. Four Christian men in Jerusalem had recently made a Nazirite vow, which was due to expire (see NUM.6:1-21). If Paul would accompany them to the temple as they completed this vow and pay their expenses, and also join with them in their purification rites (a process that would take seven days, ACTS 21:27), everyone would think that Paul had not deserted the Law of God (ACTS 21:23-24). Paul readily agreed to this proposal. If James did actually suggest or agree with such deception, then it was indeed a sad day for Truth! Paul, as we have seen, had no scruples about such deception or hypocrisy – as he had previously said: "*To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law ... so as to win those under the law*" (1stCOR.9:20-22). Anything, including lies and deception, was acceptable to him if it was going to advance the cause of Christ (or Paul?) and *his* church! Paul here shows his true colours; and the church he initiated – *THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH* – has carried on his example to the present day.

It is quite clear that Paul viewed himself as the greatest

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apostle bar none! Throughout his letters he refers to himself as an "apostle" more than twenty times; and not simply as just one of the apostles, but says: "*I (Paul) consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.*" (2ndCOR.11:5; cf. 12:11). On other occasions, almost as though he knew he should be ashamed of such claims, he would tie his assertion to a statement of unworthiness, with the hope that the gullible would embrace him as the greatest of apostles because of such humility: "*For I (Paul) am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But, by the grace of God, I am what I am,*¹⁶⁵ *and His grace toward me is not in vain; as I work harder than all the others.*" (1stCOR.15:9-10). To the Galatians, Paul made no pretense about how he compared himself to Peter, James, and John: "*As for those who seem to be important – whatever they are, it makes no difference to me; God shows favouritism to no man – those men of repute imparted nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcised had been committed to me... and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave Barnabas and I the right hand of fellowship.*" (GAL.2:6-9).

In conclusion of this evidence for Paul's psychosis and errors, let us look at a few more passages from his letters. To the Corinthians he writes: "*I (Paul) hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your*

¹⁶⁵ "*I AM WHAT I AM*" is the precise description, Name, and reference to **God Himself** in EXOD.3:14 – and Paul, an educated Pharisee, would certainly have known this very well! Thus we have here a very clear indication of Paul's high esteem of himself.

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minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! What anyone else

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dares to boast about – I am speaking as a fool – I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." (2nd COR.11:1-27).

It is clear from this passage that Paul is boiling over with envy and rage at the situation he hears is taking place at his church in Corinth. Apparently, some Jewish-Christian teachers had arrived in Corinth and were taking the leadership away from him by teaching a *different* gospel. It is likely that these teachers were appointed and sent by the Jerusalem Church, as they were obviously very highly regarded, and may have included among their number at least one of the original Apostles of Jesus – thus the term "super-apostles" which Paul disrespectfully uses to refer to them. Paul insinuates that the high esteem with which they are regarded is simply because of their eloquent language and/or their high status (viz. "super-apostles"). Someone like Paul could never accept that they might actually have been teaching the Truth! He automatically sees any other teacher as a rival, and therefore a *false prophet*. It is obvious that Paul is also extremely jealous about the Corinthians being so impressed with these new

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teachers that they are supporting them financially during their stay – something they apparently did not do for Paul (even though he declares that he refused any such support from them).¹⁶⁶ He then becomes more aggressive in his attack on these "super-apostles," saying he will continue regardless "in order to cut the ground from under them" – those who, to Paul's twisted mind, had the audacity to consider themselves equal with us (i.e. Paul himself) in the things they boast about (i.e. *anything* they say). This sounds like Paul's madness speaking. The men, as we have seen, were already considered more than equal to Paul, and anything they said would sound like boasting to a man in Paul's mental condition. All Paul can do is throw insults and threats, for he has no sound arguments or answers to their teaching. So he calls them *false apostles, deceitful workmen, Satan's servants, masquerading as apostles of Christ*. Then he turns his insults to the Corinthians – You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you, or exploits you, or takes advantage of you, or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. Paul says he was "too weak" to do anything like that – a very strange sentiment! Finally, there follows a long, crazed rambling about all his long suffering and mishaps – obviously seeking sympathy to turn the hearts of the Corinthians (it would more likely succeed in turning their stomachs) – but there is absolutely no reference to the actual substance of any teaching (true or false) contained in this letter! Any genuine Apostle of God would surely give clear substantiation of any false teaching, and provide a clear solution to any Spiritual problems – not

¹⁶⁶ It is hardly credible that Paul would have refused any financial support from the Corinthians if it had been offered. Why would he refuse it from them, but accept it from others? He tells them: "*I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed.*" It is quite obvious that the Corinthians did not wish to offer him any support.

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merely rant and rave, and sling insults and threats! Paul's letter goes on much further, with more of his boasting, sorrows and then threats – he will not forgive those who turned against him: "*On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me.*" (2ndCOR.13:2). Paul believes that previously he may have appeared "weak" in the Corinthian's estimation (2ndCOR.10:1 & 10), so he now thinks that his impending severity would provide sufficient proof that he is a spokesman of Christ. Surely, such twisted reasoning is enough in itself to prove Paul's madness. This letter to the Corinthians stands as a clear and classic example of Paul's unfortunate psychosis.

We see similar traits in Paul's letter to the Galatians: "*I (Paul) am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one (i.e. Paul himself) who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all (i.e. it is not Paul's). Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ (i.e. Paul's own gospel)... But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were Apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus... And they praised God because of me.*" (GAL.1:6-24). Note Paul's claim here that God had set him apart from birth... and revealed His Son in him – his belief that he is special, unique, and superior goes to the extreme of imagining he is equivalent to Jesus. Believing such, there was no need for him to consult "*those who were Apostles before he was*"!!! Such arrogance is typical of those with a narcissistic personality disorder.

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To the Ephesians he writes: "Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me (Paul) for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets (i.e. especially Paul)." (EPH.3:2-5). The mystery of the Lord was indeed known to many genuine Prophets throughout the ages – not only to the Hebrews, but throughout the world.

"Now to him (God? Jesus?) who is able to establish you by my (Paul's!) gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings." (ROM.16:25-26). It seems here that Paul is saying that God or Jesus will establish (the true Roman church) by the use of *Paul's own gospel!* Also, he now says that the revelation of the "hidden mystery" is made known through the prophetic writings – not by 'visions' and 'revelations' made only to him!

"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1stCOR.15:1-3).

"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead." (1stCOR.15:14-15). Here Paul clearly means Jesus when he refers to Christ. As has previously been explained (see Chapter 1,

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especially p.52 ff.), it was not the *man* (Jesus) who resurrected, but the Christ Spirit, which continually resurrects or reincarnates on Earth in a continuous succession of Divine men. God, therefore, certainly resurrected the Christ, but not in the way that Paul imagined. From this we see that Paul's '*preaching is useless and so is the faith.*' "*We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*" (1stTHES.4:14).

Paul's teaching about Jesus being a final *blood sacrifice for the sins of the world* is probably based on the accepted (erroneous) translation of Isaiah 53:5-6. A new, and better translation reads: "*But He (a Master/Messiah of Isaiah's time) was wounded due to our rebellion, and crushed because he corrected our wickedness and brought Peace to His disciples for their (Spiritual) healing.* (NOT: "by his wounds we are healed"!!!) *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord intervenes Himself for all our wickedness.*" (NOT: "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all"!!!) (ISAIAH 53:5-6). This passage speaks of a previous Master being wounded due to the people's rebellion – we are not told if the wounding was physical, or due to *inner pain and sorrow* at being rejected. In the same way He (His whole teaching of Truth and Divine Revelation of Peace and Healing) was trampled underfoot and crushed (i.e. totally rejected) by the general population who never like to hear the Truth. Maybe this Master was killed, like so many other genuine Prophets, we do not know. But the translation: "*by his wounds we are healed*" and "*the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*" are very suspect. This passage repeats the story of all the Masters who benevolently and continually come to us, for we are all like lost sheep, following our own desires, *but the Lord Himself comes, again and again, to intervene for all our*

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wickedness!

An example of Paul's confused mind can be seen in his analogy of the Divine Law with the law of marriage (see ROM.7:2-6). To illustrate the binding character of the Law, Paul uses the case of a woman who is married to a husband and remains bound by law in that relationship as long as her husband is living. During this time she is not free to seek another attachment; that may be done only in the event that the husband dies, and she would thus be released from "the law of marriage." Paul now applies this illustration in a very inconsistent way. In the case under consideration three essential statements are made: 1) a woman is married to a man; 2) the man dies; 3) the woman is then free to be married to another. In his comparison he uses the following three statements: 1) the Jewish-Christians were bound to the Law; 2) *they* have died to the Law; 3) they are now free to be joined to another. The parallel breaks down at the second item, for the Law, which is the assumed master or husband in the analogy, is not represented as dying; rather, the Jewish-Christians are said to have died to the law (the same as saying that the *wife* died). Paul avoids saying that the Law died (something that is never affirmed in Scripture). Thus the analogy is totally wrong and invalid!

There are also some rather strange and unexplained references in Paul's letters to some kind of sickness that he was suffering. To the Galatians he wrote: "*As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.*" (GAL.4:13-14). The only conclusion we can reach from this passage is that some form of unpleasant and/or embarrassing sickness lay behind Paul's first visit to the Galatians, and that, although they

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could have despised him because of it, they did not, but instead, received him favourably. They actually received him as "*an angel of God, as if he were Christ Jesus himself.*" It is noteworthy that he does not suggest here that such high respect for him was in any way wrong. On the contrary, he believes they were quite right to receive him in this manner – as if Paul himself was the Lord! Also, to the Corinthians he ambiguously mentions some kind of problem or illness which he suffers "*to keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*" (2ndCOR.12:7). The efforts to identify Paul's "thorn" are legion. But paucity of information and the obscurity of Paul's language have frustrated all attempts to solve this problem. It has been suggested by some that he suffered from epilepsy (a chronic brain disorder that briefly interrupts the normal electrical activity of the brain to cause seizures). Perhaps, if he did suffer from such embarrassing seizures, he would afterwards claim to have had a vision of Jesus, as though God had sent the convulsion for this reason. During Paul's time, many people in Hellenized world believed that epileptic seizures were of "divine origin." Hippocrates (c. 460-377 B.C.) the Greek "Father of Medicine" argued in his treatise on epilepsy '*SACRED DISEASE*' that the disease was not of divine origin: "*Men think epilepsy divine, merely because they do not understand it. But if they called everything divine which they do not understand, there would be no end of divine things. This 'Sacred Disease' appears to me to be not a bit more divine than other diseases, nor more sacred; it has a nature and a cause. Men believe it something divine through ignorance and their sense of the marvellous. Yet while its divinity is sustained because of an inability to comprehend it, this is really disproved by the simplicity of the manner in which the disease is cured, to wit, by purifications and incantations... (Those) who first ascribed this disorder to*

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the gods must have been like magicians and purifiers, charlatans and quacks of our own day who claim excessive piety and more than average knowledge, while they use divinity as a pretext and a shield for their own inability to produce a cure." (Hippocrates, THE SACRED DISEASE, Trans. by W. H. S. Jones, London: Williams Heinemann, 1923, vol. II, p. 139). Unfortunately, we can now only speculate about whether or not Paul also suffered from epilepsy.

Finally, in Paul's letter to the Philippians (written while he was sometime imprisoned – perhaps in Rome) he is discussing various local Christian teachers. He states: "*It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.*" (PHIL.1:15-18). This is all about Paul's own conceit. It is obviously his own jealousy that makes him accuse some of proclaiming the message of Christ "out of envy and rivalry." For, as far as Paul was concerned, they were not false teachers, but for some reason he considered them to be causing trouble for him while he was imprisoned. That Paul found no fault with the content of their message shows that the problem was not doctrinal but personal. He obviously believed that they were using the occasion of his confinement to promote themselves. Perhaps they had enjoyed some prominence in the church before he arrived, but had been eclipsed since he came to their city. By taking advantage of Paul's imprisonment, they may have hoped to recover their former popularity. But this envy is all clearly in Paul's own mind – whether his beliefs were true or not! On the other

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hand, the teachers who Paul commends for their goodwill and love are obviously those who are subservient to him – their goodwill and love is directed at Paul – they are *Paul's* disciples, and know that he is imprisoned "*for the defense of the gospel.*" Paul's conclusion to the situation, "*But what does it matter?*" Yet, from his previous statements, it obviously mattered greatly to him! However, being imprisoned, he could say little else. It is thus very difficult to believe that he could really rejoice, "*Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.*" This episode is yet another clear indication of Paul's narcissistic personality.

There are many other examples in Paul's letters which demonstrate his various inconsistencies, errors, ambiguities, and symptoms of psychosis. It would require another lengthy study by a fully qualified and unbiased psychologist to examine everything fully.

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